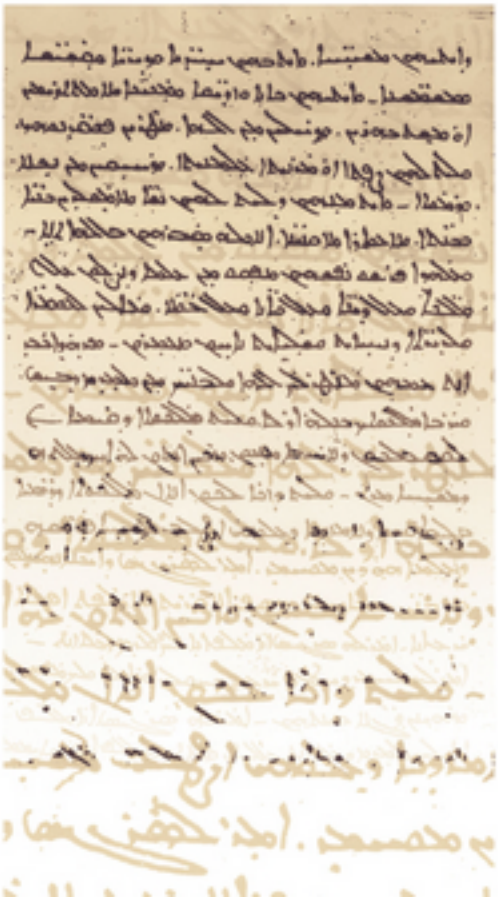
# The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā

## *Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam*

Barbara Roggema



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# The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā

# History of Christian-Muslim Relations

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VOLUME 9

# The Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā

## Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam

*by*

Barbara Roggema

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*Front cover illustration*: The cover illustration is based on a leaf from Mingana Syr. 71, reproduced by permission of Special Collections, Library Services, University of Birmingham. It features the passage where Sergius Baḥīrā teaches Muḥammad that among the Christians there are monks and priests who are righteous, humble and not proud—an allusion to Q 5:82.

Christians and Muslims have been involved in exchanges over matters of faith and morality since the founding of Islam. Attitudes between the faiths today are deeply coloured by the legacy of past encounters, and often preserve centuries-old negative views.

*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations, Texts and Studies* presents the surviving record of past encounters in authoritative, fully introduced text editions and annotated translations, and also monograph and collected studies. It illustrates the development in mutual perceptions as these are contained in surviving Christian and Muslim writings, and makes available the arguments and rhetorical strategies that, for good or for ill, have left their mark on attitudes today. The series casts light on a history marked by intellectual creativity and occasional breakthroughs in communication, although, on the whole beset by misunderstanding and misrepresentation. By making this history better known, the series seeks to contribute to improved recognition between Christians and Muslims in the future.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just over a hundred years ago Prof. Richard Gottheil published the *editio princeps* of the Eastern Christian *Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā* in a series of articles in the *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*. It is long overdue that reliable editions and translations of the Syriac and Arabic recensions of this legend be made available to all who are interested in the history of Christian-Muslim disputation. Not only does Gottheil's hasty reading of the manuscripts leave much to be desired, but many more manuscripts have surfaced as well and a second Arabic recension has been discovered. The progress made in the field of Eastern Christian apocalyptic and apologetic literature also gives us the opportunity to better understand the intellectual world of the tellers of this tale, the Christians in the Near East who tried to reinterpret their past and their future in the face of a new religion, Islam, that became a dominant force in their lives.

This study is a slightly reworked version of my Ph.D. dissertation, which I completed in 2006 and defended at the University of Groningen in the Spring of 2007. Now that I have completed this arduous task, it is a great pleasure to be able to express my gratitude in print to the many people and organizations that have supported my research. I am sincerely grateful to the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for recognizing the importance of this project and for funding my research generously. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Dr. Gerrit J. Reinink for introducing me to the fascinating world of Syriac apocalyptic literature. I am much indebted to him for his guidance in regard to editing the Syriac texts, for his advice on Christological matters and for the painstaking care with which he has read my editions, translations and commentary at various stages of the project.

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Peter صخرتي Hatlie, thank you for your immense goodness.

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| *AQ* | *al-Qanṭara: Revista de estudios árabes* |
| *BJRL* | *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* |
| *BMGS* | *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* |
| *BSIH* | *Brill's Studies in Intellectual History* |
| *BSOAS* | *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* |
| *BZ* | *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* |
| *CSCO* | *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* |
| *CSS* | *Variorum Collected Studies Series* |
| *DOP* | *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* |
| *EI2* | *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition, 12 vols, Leiden, 1954–2004* |
| *HCMR* | *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations* |
| *HTR* | *Harvard Theological Review* |
| *HUCA* | *Hebrew Union College Annual* |
| *IC* | *Islamic Culture* |
| *IHC* | *Islamic History and Civilization* |
| *ICMR* | *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* |
| *IOS* | *Israel Oriental Studies* |
| *IPTS* | *Islamic Philosophy Theology and Science* |
| *JA* | *Journal Asiatique* |
| *JAAR* | *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* |
| *JAOS* | *Journal of the American Oriental Society* |
| *JJS* | *Journal of Jewish Studies* |
| *JNES* | *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* |
| *JQR* | *Jewish Quarterly Review* |
| *JRAS* | *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* |
| *JSAI* | *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* |
| *JSS* | *Journal of Semitic Studies* |
| *JTS* | *Journal of Theological Studies* |
| *MGH* | *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* |
| *MGWJ* | *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* |
| *MIDEO* | *Mélanges. Institut dominicain d'études orientales du Caire* |
| *MW* | *Moslem World/Muslim World* |
| *OC* | *Oriens Christianus* |
| *OCA* | *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* |
| *OCP* | *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* |
| *OLA* | *Orientalia Lovaniensa Analecta* |
| *PAC* | *Proche-Orient Chrétien* |
| *P d'O* | *Parole de l'Orient* |
| *PG* | *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca Prior, ed. J.P. Migne* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *PAAJR* | *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* |
| *PL* | *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina, ed. J.P. Migne* |
| *PO* | *Patrologia Orientalis* |
| *REI* | *Revue des études islamiques* |
| *REJ* | *Revue des études juives* |
| *RHR* | *Revue de l'histoire des religions* |
| *ROC* | *Revue de l'orient chrétien* |
| *RSO* | *Rivista degli Studi orientali* |
| *SI* | *Studia Islamica* |
| *SLAEI* | *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* |
| *UCOP* | *University of Cambridge Oriental Publications* |
| *WO* | *Welt des Orients* |
| *ZA* | *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* |
| *ZDMG* | *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* |

# INTRODUCTION

The texts presented in this study have at their core a very simple idea. It is the idea that the Prophet Muḥammad, during his early years, encountered a Christian monk. Most Muslims and Christians in the Middle East, who as early as the eighth century CE were telling stories about this encounter, would not have liked to call this encounter an 'idea' but rather a 'historical given'. Although they had different opinions about what happened during the encounter, they all agreed that it was hugely significant for a correct understanding of where Islam came from, what its message was and whether it was truly founded on divine revelation. Those questions were ultimately tied to the question of who they were themselves, since all of the believers who told stories about the early years of Muḥammad saw themselves as belonging to religious communities whose claims to possessing divine truth automatically excluded the truths of others.

Each religious community in the Middle East had learned men who were experts at making it clear why its members should be satisfied with the faith and tradition they grew up with. They stressed that adherence to its doctrines and rituals was the one and only path to truth and bliss. Their treatises are sophisticated in their argumentation and rhetoric and they are clearly the result of extensive reflection and a tenacious pursuit of the elucidation of their view of the truth. Paradoxically, they seem to make the hard work of their authors almost superfluous, since one of the most insistent messages of these texts is the idea that the truth is *obvious*. Yet, one does not even need to begin to try to penetrate the thoughts of their authors to understand that it is precisely the fact that the truth is not obvious which impelled them to work so assiduously on their apologetics.

Today one can simply take a pile of their works, spread them out on one's desk and see clearly that together they embody the 'sectarian milieu' of the late antique and early Islamic Middle East. One would then see a mosaic of competing self-images that are grounded in cultural elements common to all Near Eastern peoples: literary genres, prophetic history, concepts of contact between the human and the

Divine, and types of philosophical argumentation. Through complex strategies of adaptation and rejection of these shared elements, each community came away with its own coherent, exclusive and exclusivist self-image. The polished treatises that the apologists produced were meant to impose these self-images on—but are also as such products of—what lies underneath: the unpredictable world of individuals whose identities consisted of many more facets than religious convictions alone. These individuals also happened to be clan members or Baghdadis or scientists or craftsmen or poets or youngsters or lovers or neighbors or slaves. They had practical and emotional grounds to question their attachment to their parental faith and perhaps also reasons to be indifferent. Some of them did not fail to notice that the self-evident truth, to which they were told they had access, did not translate into a homogeneous society or into a just society. That is how questions came up about the abstractions made by religious authority figures—critical questions which believers asked themselves, along with critical questions that others asked for them.

In response to the threat of the disintegration of their communities and the dilution of religious identity, the apologists of all the different Christian churches in the Middle East became particularly devoted to the reinforcement of their coherent self-image. The fact that new and increasingly challenging questions kept on emerging, both from people within their communities and from those extraneous to them, meant that new and increasingly intricate answers needed to be constructed over time. It need not surprise us, then, that along with these evolving apologetics and evolving ideas about what Islam meant to the Christian communities, the 'idea' of an encounter between the Prophet Muḥammad and a Christian monk changed as well. The stories about this alleged encounter mutated over a number of centuries to answer different questions at different times. Although Christians were eager to narrate the story to serve as an explanation of much of Islamic doctrine, eventually, in light of discussions about God's intervention in human history and the lasting power of Muslims over the Christian communities, it was the story itself which needed to be explained.

The present study addresses the question of the evolution of this 'idea' in the light of the development of Eastern Christian apologetics vis-à-vis Islam. It explores the interplay of anti-Muslim polemic and Christian apologetics in the many narratives that revolve around this encounter. Apart from numerous anecdotes and short references to it in different kinds of sources, it forms the basis of four closely related Chris-

tian texts which modern scholars call the *Baḥīrā Legend* or the *Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā*. Editions and translations of these texts are presented in the pages below, together with a detailed analysis of their interrelationship, of their methods of refuting Islam and of their dialogic relationship with similar Christian writings and authoritative Muslim sources. Through an investigation of these questions, this study tries to uncover the overarching apologetic structure of each of these texts.

After three of these four recensions appeared in a disappointingly defective edition completed by Richard Gottheil in 1903, little attention has been paid to them.[1] Only a handful of articles have been published in the century following Gottheil's publications, and the analysis of the texts in each of these has suffered from the errors in Gottheil's edition. When it comes to related texts produced by Syriac and Arabic-speaking Christians, we can say the opposite. In the last decades immense progress has been made in the study of the world of Christians living in the Islamic world. Among other things, many Syriac and Christian-Arabic disputational texts, apocalypses, chronicles have appeared in critical editions and translations for the first time. Research into the intellectual and spiritual life of the Eastern Christian communities in Islamic times has broadened and deepened in the last decades. The great advancements allow us to explore the *Legend* in many more ways than a century ago.

The texts and translations of four versions of the *Baḥīrā Legend* can be found in Part Two. We ought to call these versions 'recensions', since the major differences that exist between the respective groups of manuscripts representing those versions can only be explained as the result of deliberate attempts of redactors to create a new text through interventions in existent texts. The editions are meant to provide the reader with a reliable witness to the various stages of the evolution of this legend. Two of the recensions are written in Syriac, and two are in Arabic. The editions are based on almost all accessible manuscripts. Gottheil's edition contained only three of the four recensions.[2] To cor-

[1] Gottheil's edition is speckled with misreadings (e.g. frequent confusion of ـــه and ـــى) and typeset errors which make the text incomprehensible. He also printed some of the passages of ES in the WS recension and vice versa (presumably through the mixing up of notecards).

[2] Gottheil had access to at least one of the manuscripts of the fourth version as well, but, probably after realizing that it was not possible to collate it with the text found in the other manuscripts, abandoned the idea of including it in the edition of what he thought to be the only Arabic recension.

rect this lacuna this shorter Arabic recension will appear here for the first time. Because of its closeness to the Syriac texts it will be referred to as A1, as opposed to the longer Arabic recension designated as A2. For the sake of convenience the two Syriac recensions and A1 will occasionally be referred to as 'the synoptic recensions'; A2 stands apart from the point of view of content, structure and apologetic method. The two Syriac recensions will be referred to as ES and WS ('East-Syrian' and 'West-Syrian').

The editions and translations are preceded by Chapter Eight, in which several issues concerning the texts will be presented, including distinctions between the recensions, descriptions of the manuscripts, the genealogy of the recensions, the genealogy of the manuscripts, and the method of edition and translation.

A series of analytical chapters precede both these technical discussions of the texts and the editions and translations of the texts themselves. The goal of these opening chapters, which comprise Part One of the study, is to give an in-depth introduction to the *Legend* in the light of Christian apologetics vis-à-vis Islam. To that end, Chapter One is devoted to a discussion of the various mechanisms detectable in common literary responses to the undermining of Christian tradition by Islam. Chapter Two discusses the Islamic stories about encounters of the Prophet with Christians in light of their function in Islamic life and discourse. Chapter Three is concerned with the apocalyptic parts of the *Legend*, especially with the Muslim apocalyptic figures which appear in them, and includes a discussion of the date of the *Legend* in its early form. Chapter Four investigates those aspects of the *Legend* which serve to underpin the claim that Islamic doctrine can be traced back to Christianity. Along the same lines, Chapter Five deals with the question of how the *Legend* exploits the Qur'an, together with Muslim and Christian exegesis of it, in order to prove that it has a distinct Christian substratum. Chapter Six provides a larger context within which to read the *Legend*. It consists of an extensive survey of other Christian sources, both Eastern and Western, in which Islam is explained from the point of view of an encounter of the Prophet with a Christian and reveals the startling amount of interpretations given to this idea. The Concluding Discussion of Part One will take up the question of how the *Legend* compares to all these other encounter tales and how the concept of counterhistory can help us to understand the evolution of the *Legend*.

Christian responses to Islam in literary form have survived from the late seventh century onwards. The production of apologetic texts was at its height during the first ʿAbbasid century, but it has continued steadily after that. In my research on these texts I have included Christian Arabic texts from as late a date as the thirteenth century, because they seemed relevant for our understanding of the *Baḥīrā Legend*.[3] As for the dates of the recensions themselves, it will be shown that there are many reasons to conclude that the 'synoptic' recensions go back to a text originating in the first ʿAbbasid century, even though physical evidence does not take us back further than the thirteenth century. A2 is clearly from a later date than the 'synoptic' recensions, but physical evidence shows that it is definitely from before the mid-thirteenth century.

Recensions of the *Baḥīrā Legend* circulated in the East-Syrian ('Nestorian'), West-Syrian ('Jacobite'), Melkite and Coptic communities. In order to appreciate the argumentation in these recensions other apologetic works from all these 'churches' will receive attention, which means that our geographical area stretches from Iraq to Egypt. It is important to understand that in many cases the authors of these works do not profile themselves *in these works* as adherents to the distinct doctrines of their traditions. This is not to say that they are not interested in asserting their identity as members of their respective churches. On the contrary, we see them writing numerous treatises against their Christian opponents as well. However, in the face of Islam their positions frequently appear as 'Christian' in a general sense. This is not surprising, since it was the most fundamental layer of Christian doctrine that had to be defended against Islamic challenges. In my discussions of how these defenses worked, I generally refer to them as 'Christian', even though we have to keep in mind that the works in question are often part of a collection of writings which as a whole can be seen as a defense of an apologist's particular church.

[3] This is not to say that looking beyond that era would not be interesting. See for example Ch. 6, p. 195, for some references to traditions about Baḥīrā from the twentieth century. From among many later works, one could also note the controversial study *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran*, written by a Lebanese Christian under the pseudonym Christoph Luxenberg and published in the year 2000. This study attempts to uncover a Syriac substratum in the Qurʾan, which according to the author has been obscured through erroneous diacritical punctuation of the Arabic text. Although not explicitly mentioning the monk Baḥīrā, this work is a late representative of the same tradition of Middle-Eastern Christians who purport to know more about the origins of Islam than their Muslim neighbours do.

As I indicated above, the four recensions in this study have collectively been referred to as the *Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā* or the *Baḥīrā Legend*. Even though the four recensions clearly differ in wording and serve different purposes, I nevertheless maintain that one can refer to them collectively, since the texts share a basic narrative skeleton and methods of apologetic. For the sake of brevity and convenience I will refer to the four recensions together as the *Legend*. This term by definition excludes other texts, whether Christian or Muslim, which have an encounter of the Prophet with a monk as their central theme.[4] Having chosen this convenient label, I should note that the term 'legend' is, as such, a choice of modern scholars.[5] It is not a term used by the people who transmitted the texts and to whom, judging from the names that they gave it, the *Legend* represented a piece of history.[6] To what extent the concept of 'legend' as a genre of literature is meaningful for our understanding of the genesis, development and functions of the *Legend*, has not been addressed. The *Legend* needs to be read, above all, as a piece of Christian apologetics vis-à-vis Islam in a narrative form.[7] Considerable attention is paid in the following chapters to the question of how the combination of different genres (the historical apocalypse, hagiography and *erotapokriseis*) within the *Legend* serves the agenda of the apologist.

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[4] Gottheil presumably considered other texts 'Baḥīrā Legends' as well, since he called his publication of the *Legend* 'A Christian Bahira Legend', with the indefinite article.

[5] See the first publication of Gottheil on the subject of the Syriac texts, 'A Syriac Baḥīrā Legend', as well as Carra de Vaux, 'La légende de Bahira', which is the first detailed discussion of the long Arabic recension.

[6] To them it was a *taš'ītā*, 'account', 'biography', 'story', 'history' (designation in both Syriac recensions), and similarly in Arabic: a *khabar*, 'historical report', (in the title of the long Arabic recension; cf. the term *mutawallī l-akhbār* used for the narrator in the short Arabic recension).

[7] This is not to say that an analysis of the *Legend* in the light of definition of 'legend' as genre cannot add new insights into the workings of it. As a matter of fact, the twelve investigative criteria (Ecker, *Die Legende*, esp. pp. 345–349) that have been established in order to identify 'legends' as 'sowohl historische als auch strukturell-systematische Teilklasse einer Gruppe narrativer, dogmen- und publikumsbezogener Texte' all appear applicable to the *Legend* and they may be useful as ways to further explore the dynamics between the text and its community. Such a study deserves to be undertaken at a future point in time.

# NOTE ON CONVENTIONS

Titles appear in an abbreviated form in the footnotes, as well as in the main text of Chapter Eight. The complete bibliographical references can be found in the bibliography. The short titles are not repeated there. Edited and translated works frequently appear under the names of the editors and/or translators if the publisher gives them precedence over the ancient author as well and/or if their contribution to a volume is significant. In these cases, the works also appear under the name of the editor in the bibliography. The abbreviation used for page (p.) is also used to refer to columns. *Recto* and *verso* sides of the folios of manuscripts are distinguished by 'a' and 'b' respectively. After the citation of a work whose title does not clearly indicate that it entails a text edition, (t) will be added to clarify that it is a reference to the original text. Translations of primary sources will be signaled by (tr) after the citation. If a text edition and translation are presented jointly on the page or appear on consecutive pages, the citation will be followed by (ttr).

Quotations of Biblical and Qur'anic verses are based on—but are not literal quotations of—of several of the most commonly used English translations. References to near-quotations from Scripture in the footnotes are prefixed by *. Allusions to Scripture are prefixed by 'Cf.' in the footnotes.

Dates are generally given according to the 'Common Era'. Hijrī dates will be given only where deemed relevant.

PART ONE

# THE LEGEND OF SERGIUS BAḤĪRĀ IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS VIS-À-VIS ISLAM

CHAPTER ONE

# MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN CONFRONTATION AND COUNTERHISTORY

> *As for negation, it is not proof; just as assent is not proof, any more than our faith in our Prophet is a proof against others, or their unbelief a proof against us. Proof is something transmitted in such a way that falsity is impossible.*
>
> Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*[1]

In the Qur'an God declares 'what We have revealed to you from the Book is the truth, confirming what was before it'.[2] Muḥammad is represented in the Qur'an as following in the footsteps of the earlier prophets, with whose message his own agrees. The ancient prophets themselves had already promised to God that they would give faith and support to a prophet who was to come in the future and who would confirm their message.[3] But, as is well-known, the Qur'an passes several unambiguous and acrimonious judgments on the communities to whom these earlier prophets were sent. The fact that the message of the earlier prophets has been altered or forgotten by the peoples to whom they were sent is one of the principal reasons for Muḥammad's own mission. In the case of Christians, their belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation comes under direct attack. The rejection of these doctrines is voiced in clear terms. God is not 'a third of three' and 'He begets not nor is He begotten'.[4] None of these doctrines were ever propagated by Christ himself, according to the Qur'an.

Behind this directly confrontational aspect of the Qur'an lies a much more hidden and subtle kind of polemic vis-à-vis non-Muslim communities. Its aim was to explain how it was that Muḥammad could

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[1] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 3, pp. 223–281, p. 251.

[2] Q 35:31, cf. Q 2:4, Q 2:41, Q 2:91, Q 97, Q 3:3, Q 4:47, Q 6:92, Q 5:46–48, Q 10:94

[3] Q 3:81

[4] Q 5:73, Q 112:3

align himself with the ancient prophets, on the one hand, and reject many of the doctrines of their followers, on the other. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Islam's self-image lies precisely in the tension created by these two opposite poles. Generally speaking, one can say that the Qur'an manages to disentangle Judaism and Christianity in their later forms from their respective founders by contrasting their pristine messages with the faith and behavior of their latter-day communities. To substantiate this contrast, the Qur'an re-enacts the lives of the earlier prophets and also presents new revelations about events in their lives. It refreshes the memory of their followers and shows them where they have gone astray. It discloses sayings and deeds of the earlier prophets that have purportedly been lost, such as Christ speaking in the cradle or his explicit declaration that a prophet would come after him, whose name would be Aḥmad.[5] The Qur'an even records conversations between God and Christ *verbatim*, which serve to take away any doubt about both God's intention with and Christ's fulfillment of the message of the Gospel.[6] Such fresh revelations were meant to correct prevalent but erroneous ideas. For example, something resembling the crucifixion of Christ had indeed happened according to the Qur'an, but it was not as it had seemed: contrary to what almost all Christians thought, Christ, in Qur'anic reality, had been spared that abominable fate of dying on the cross.

The critique of Christian traditions takes shape not only through the presence of the competing ideas enclosed in the Qur'an. It is also to be found in decisive terms in Qur'anic verses which accuse the 'People of the Book' of hiding, neglecting, and frittering away God's words.[7] Conversely, there were also verses in which Christians could positively recognize themselves as true believers.[8] But this did not make the message of the Qur'an less challenging, because such verses

[5] Q 19:29–33, Q 61:6

[6] Many Muslim authors, Sufis in particular, have followed this example and 'recorded' other sayings of Christ. In their works Christ becomes a mouthpiece for their own outlook on life and faith. See the collections Asín y Palacios, 'Logia et Agrapha' and Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus*, and *id*, 'The role of Jesus in Intra-Muslim Polemics'.

[7] Q 3:71, Q 3:187, Q 5:14–15. The accusation that Christians falsified their Scriptures is not explicit in the Qur'an, but on the basis of these and similar verses the notion of *taḥrīf* (falsification of the Bible) came into being in the eighth century. For the concept see: Gaudeul, 'Textes concernant le Taḥrīf', Di Matteo, 'Il « Taḥrīf » od Alterazione della Bibbia'.

[8] For example: Q 5:82–83, Q 3:199; as well as the many verses in which Christian doctrine is left intact.

symbolized the Qur'an's attempt to pass an authoritative judgment regarding Christians and this only emphasized the fact that Islam had come to supplant their sacred history.

Once it dawned on them that the movement of Muḥammad was proclaiming a universal message with a doctrinal and intellectual challenge to their community and its roots, Christians in the Near East began to find ways to formulate cogent responses to it. After a phase in which there does not appear to have been more than just an embryonic awareness of Islam's challenge, a more consistent response to Islam appeared. Dating to the late seventh century, this took the form of literary compositions in which explanations were sought for the presence of the Islamic movement in a Christian world.[9] From late Umayyad and early ʿAbbasid times a number of texts have come down to us which reflect the efforts of apologists to find persuasive ways to counteract the religious propaganda of Islam. Then, over the course of the first ʿAbbasid century, a plethora of apologetic texts appeared, mainly in response to the interreligious confrontation, especially in Baghdad, where Christians found themselves surrounded by followers of several different religions.[10] It is generally believed that the rapid Arabization of the Near Eastern world and the acceleration of conversion to Islam were the two principal factors in this explosion of literature in defense of Christianity.

One well-known early example is the work of the Melkite theologian John of Damascus (d. before 754). He devoted a chapter to Islam in his heresiographical work *De Haeresibus*, which survives as one of the oldest Christian texts in which the Qur'an is discussed.[11] Although John's knowledge of the Qur'an is rather rudimentary, he is clearly

[9] The first significant literary composition is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, which was probably written in the last decade of the seventh century in response to the consolidation of Islamic rule under ʿAbd al-Malik and his religious propaganda. The apocalyptic outlook on Islam remained popular in Eastern Christian writings of the later centuries and the Legend is one witness to that trend; see below: Ch. 3.

[10] The best introduction to Christian apologetic texts in Syriac and Arabic from this time and their attitude to Islam is Griffith, 'The Prophet Muḥammad'.

[11] The oldest surviving copy of this text is from the ninth century. An excerpt of it can be found in a manuscript that could be as early as the mid-eighth. For this reason the text can no longer be assigned to a late date, nor is it certain that John is definitely the author. See the summary of these research findings in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 484–485; note also his convincing argument that the fact that Islam is discussed in this work on heresies does not mean that it portrays Islam as a Christian heresy; it categorizes all false beliefs as 'heresy'. See also: Louth, *St John Damascene*, pp. 76–83.

aware of the fact that it has a lot to say about *his* God. He quotes a discussion between God and Jesus, in which Jesus distances himself from the excessive way in which he is worshiped:

> And this is what [Mameth] says, that when Christ went up to the heavens God questioned him saying: 'O Jesus, did you say that I am Son of God, and God?' And Jesus, they say, answered: 'Be merciful to me, Lord; you know that I did not say so, nor will I boast that I am your servant; but men who have gone astray wrote that I made this statement and they said lies against me and they have been in error'. And God, they say, answered to him: 'I knew that you would not say this thing'.[12]

John simply ridicules this supposed discussion between God and Christ, calling it one of Muḥammad's 'absurdities worthy of laughter'. To him it was clear that this could not be part of revelation, nor could his sacred history be simply rewritten by newcomers. Similarly, in the alleged correspondence between the Caliph ʿUmar II and the Byzantine Emperor Leo III, the latter dwells on one of the most striking examples of how Islam's history diverges from that of Jews and Christians: the idea that Abraham had lived in Arabia.[13] To Leo it seems unlikely that Abraham had a history in Mecca that was previously unknown:

> Holy Scripture tells us nothing about Abraham having gone to the place which afterwards, according to the order of Muḥammad, became the centre of adoration of your co-religionists.[14]

The Kaʿba, according to Leo, was a site located in a diabolical arid desert that 'Abraham never saw nor so much as dreamed of'.[15] He

[12] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 132–135 (ttr); Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, pp. 74–77 (ttr). The conversation between God and Christ cited by John is noteworthy because it agrees largely with Q 5:116–117 but omits the reference to the worship of Mary. John seems to have heard—not read—this tradition, since he says several times: 'they say'. On the whole his knowledge of the Qur'an seems sketchy. For the discussions on Q 5:116–117 in Muslim-Christian confrontation, see also below: Ch. 5, pp. 132–133.

[13] This correspondence has been reconstructed on the basis of pieces surviving in Armenian, Aljamiado, Arabic and Latin. The Arabic text containing part of 'Umar's alleged letter survives in a mid- or late ninth-century manuscript; the Armenian survives in the *History* of Ghevond, who wrote in the late eighth century. Gaudeul brought these texts together in his 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar'. Hoyland, in a detailed study of these texts, demonstrates that there must have existed a piece of correspondence that consisted of more than just one letter and one answer. The redactions available to us now are most likely from the ninth century with an eighth-century substratum, according to Hoyland. See his: 'The Correspondence of Leo III and 'Umar II' and *Seeing Islam*, pp. 490–501.

[14] Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', p. 310 (tr).

[15] Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', pp. 322–323 (tr).

feels confident that by citing his own Holy Scripture he can disprove what to him are the whims of Muḥammad. This, however, could hardly have been effective, because his Muslim counterpart in the dispute, the Caliph ʿUmar II, had already declared that he did not believe in the integrity of the Bible.[16]

The dispute over Abraham's story is one of the most prominent examples of the clash of Biblical and Qurʾanic history. The brief exchange between Leo and ʿUmar on this issue illustrates the challenge of both Christian and Muslim apologists to show the authenticity of their respective traditions. Muslims, for their part, embraced this challenge with considerable vigor during the eighth and ninth centuries, as many Muslim thinkers sought to explain why Islam had legitimate claims to make and why the Qurʾanic view of history was demonstrably 'truer' than that of the 'People of the Book'. In early ʿAbbasid times great effort was made to prove Muḥammad's prophethood and the truth of Islam in an *absolute* way.[17] The issue ran parallel to but also often intersected with intra-Muslim discussions on what constituted religious authority and how Islam should be an organizing factor in a quickly expanding Caliphate.

Before going more deeply into the question of how Christians constructed their responses to Islam, I will briefly discuss the methods employed by early Muslim theologians to establish the truth of their revelation and tradition. In addition, I will explore how these attempts to affirm the tenets of Islam ultimately affected the nature of early Muslim-Christian debate.

One of the essential elements in the formulation of Muḥammad's credentials as a prophet was to be found in the documentation of his life, since every kind of argumentation, in one way or another, involved references to his words and deeds. This undertaking spread itself out over a number of centuries, and, as a matter of fact, no consensus was ever reached within the Muslim community at large

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[16] See the translation of the Aljamiado part of Leo's letter in: Gaudeul, 'The Correspondence between Leo and ʿUmar', pp. 134–136 (tr). That this accusation had indeed reached Leo, or the redactor of his letter, is clear from the reference to it in the introduction, (Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', p. 277 (tr)), as well as the many counterarguments presented in the reply.

[17] An introduction to the genre of 'Proofs of Prophethood' and a survey of some of the main authors and their arguments can be found with Adang, *Muslim Authors on Judaism*, pp. 117–140.

about how it could be proven that Muḥammad had truly been sent by God. The arguments remained very diverse. The search for absolute certainty of the exclusive truth of Islam during the formative period of Islamic thought coincided with the increasing significance of Muḥammad's life for the guidance of the community. The growing sense that not only the revelation of the Qur'an to Muḥammad but also the revelation encrypted in his life was a source of knowledge for the believers formed the basis for the formulation of Islamic law. Knowing what God, as Lawgiver, intended for the community became increasingly a matter of looking back at a 'historically fixed theophany'.[18] But the fact that this theophany was believed to have been expressed in events of the past did not mean that the canon of historical reports about the Prophet had been closed. On the contrary, to a large extent his history still needed to be 'fixed', since many opposing groups and individuals expressed their views through alleged sayings of the Prophet.

The urge to establish Muḥammad's precise 'records' in turn provoked debates about how certainty can be reached about historical events. Most scholars maintained that in theory knowledge could be abstracted from historical reports; if not, then tradition would have no value at all. In order to be able to verify reports, scholars debated how people acquire 'historical knowledge'. A fact upon which everyone agrees (i.e. there being 'consensus', *ijmāʿ*) was considered valid, for example, insofar as such a fact has the effect of becoming true to someone who becomes acquainted with it for the first time. The validity of a single historical report was furthermore established by confirming the presence of indubitable witnesses during the event and large-scale transmission afterwards (*tawātur*). Such criteria, which differed in details from one time and place to another, were frequently stated at the beginning of handbooks of both *kalām* and *fiqh* and served as clear-cut declarations of objectivity and reliability.

But things were not that simple. The early Muʿtazilīs, who set this issue high on their agendas, realized that a strong focus on the conditions of transmission without looking at the actual content of a report was in reality untenable, since it did not lead to the elimination of conflicting historical reports. If indeed authenticated reports were to have the same epistemological value as sense-perception, then how can there

[18] Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*, p. 130.

be so many conflicted reports about crucial historical events? And is it logically tenable that the majority is always right?

It seems that the shadowy progenitor of the Muʿtazilīs, Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ (d. 749), had already been working on such questions. By asking how the accounts of the Battle of the Camel could be so contradictory, for example, he had come up with methods of determining historical truth that bear some resemblance to the later *Uṣūl al-fiqh*.[19] Some decades later the Muʿtazilis were dealing with the question of the value of a report transmitted by one individual only, a so-called *khabar al-wāḥid* (pl. *akhbār al-āḥād*). Discussions about the value of such reports were symptomatic of the fact that the Muʿtazilīs found themselves squeezed between the morbid growth of spurious prophetic traditions and the apologetic need for miracles of Muḥammad, which were dependent on extra-Qurʾanic traditions.[20] Al-Naẓẓām (d. c. 840) posited that the community of believers can agree upon an error.[21] He also believed that a report transmitted by a small number of people may engender knowledge, while a piece of information transmitted by a large crowd could be false.[22] In other words, it was inevitable to look more closely at the intentions with which people may spread reports. Looking at people's motives for inventing things and ruling out collusion (*tawāṭuʾ*) could be used as a tool to separate the historical wheat from the chaff.[23]

Not surprisingly, this issue of collusion and its motives became a major bone of contention between opposing parties in an interreligious

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[19] Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, pp. 276–280; in this section I refer frequently to this work which discusses these problems in remarkable detail and gives references to both extant and lost works on the topic. There is also a brief but clear survey of the different views on historicity among early Muslims by the same author: 'L'authorité de la tradition prophétique'.

[20] See for example the views of Ḍirār ibn ʿAmr (d. c. 796) and al-Aṣamm (d. 817): Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, pp. 407–408, vol. 3, pp. 51–52, vol. 5, p. 211, p. 247. See Stroumsa, 'The Signs of Prophecy', pp. 107–109 for the Muʿtazilīs having to tackle the *muḥaddithūn* and the *Ahl al-Kitāb* at the same time.

[21] Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 3, pp. 385–386. See also vol. 6, pp. 183–187 for his critique of the reliability of the sayings of the Prophet and the trustworthiness of its transmitters.

[22] Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 6, pp. 176–190 (translations from several sources describing al-Naẓẓām's views; especially the extensive quotations from al-Jāḥiẓ' *Kitāb al-akhbār* show that al-Naẓẓām targets the *muḥaddithūn* with his criticism).

[23] Collusion could consist of, for example, collectively spreading news about a miraculous event that did not take place or the opposite: deliberately suppressing reports about miracles that did take place. The term was probably already used by Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ (Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, p. 279).

confrontation. Each side could easily find a way to cast doubt on the stated motives of the other. Muslim theologians determined, for example, that Christians had a motive for suppressing references in the Bible to Muḥammad's coming, because they could foresee their loss of power when he was to appear.[24] Conversely, Christians reasoned that many people who proclaimed belief in Muḥammad's miracles may have done so hypocritically, because the new religion gave them a more favorable position in society.[25]

The fact that such insinuations about the fabrication and suppression of reports became part of the discussion made solid authentication problematic. The 'discovery' of circumstances and motives that could have played a role when erroneous tenets and reports came into being was a way to dispel some of the claims of the other communities, but as these debates proceeded nothing could get resolved, because detailed eye-witness accounts of groundbreaking events did not exist. The data that were needed to establish what happened *exactly* when Muḥammad challenged his people to produce something like the Qurʾan or what happened *exactly* when Christ was condemned to death were simply lacking. The first was of crucial importance for the affirmation of the inimitability of the Qurʾan, while the second was crucial for the affirmation of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

This is how some Muslim scholars became aware of the fact that it was hazardous to focus too much on the past in order to find the foundations of one's doctrines. Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) expressed this very point in *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*. According to him, the *mutakallimūn*, although they aspired to present the ultimate proof of the truth of Islam, they were in reality to blame for the lack of it. They were so preoccupied with the defense of Islam vis-à-vis other faiths that they failed to reach any of Islam's essential religious truths. He believed that their methods even put the defense of Islam into jeopardy. Their extreme efforts to find the perfect proof of prophethood threatened to undermine the faith rather than strengthen it. In making a case for a mystical search for knowledge, al-Ghazālī wrote:

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[24] See how Ibn Hishām puts this motivation not to accept Islam into the mouth of the bishop Abū Ḥāritha of Najrān, as he is one his way to meet the Prophet: '[The people] have given us titles, paid us subsidies, and honoured us. But they are absolutely opposed to him, and if I were to accept him they would take from us all that you see' (Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 401–402 (t), quoted from: Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 271 (tr)).

[25] See also below: p. 27.

> Seek sure and certain knowledge of prophecy in this [mystical] way, not from the changing of the staff into a serpent and the splitting of the moon. For if you consider that sort of thing alone, without adding the many, indeed numerable circumstances accompanying it you might think that it was a case of magic or deception […] Furthermore, if your faith were based on a carefully ordered argument about the way the apologetic miracle affords proof of prophecy, your faith will be broken by an equally well-ordered argument showing how difficulty and doubt may affect that mode of proof.[26]

Al-Ghazālī was himself the living proof that such a religious and epistemological crisis could indeed occur. His alternative vision of Islam became Sufism. Although not many had expressed it in such clear terms, he was not the first to observe that the search for the exact proof of the truth of Islam, or of other religions, was a complicated and delicate matter. Going back to the early Muʿtazilīs, one cannot fail to observe that already in the early ninth century many of the apologetic arguments in defense of Islam could be countered by what al-Ghazālī later called an 'equally well-ordered argument'.

This did not mean that the dialectical theology, in which the historical arguments played such an essential role, was abandoned. Instead, double standards crept into the debate early on: historical truth for internal consumption was different from that which was presented to outsiders. This can be shown by means of a simple but poignant example. Christians thought they possessed a winning argument against the validity of Islamic tradition, based on the principles of the verification of historical reports that Muslim scholars themselves had put forth. If conspiracy (*tawāṭu'*) is impossible between rival groups, then the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the Jews and Christians on the historicity of the crucifixion of Christ speaks against Muḥammad's claim that it did not take place. The famous early Muʿtazilite Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. c. 841) claimed to have a solution to this problem. According to him the problem at the crucifixion was that there were no witnesses present who belonged to the 'People of Paradise' (*Ahl al-janna*). With this he meant a special category of pious people—to be exact, twenty per generation—whom God protects from error.[27] When looking at such arguments

[26] al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, quoted from McCarthy, *Freedom and Fulfillment*, p. 100 (tr), see also pp. 68–69 for the translator's comments on the *mutakallimūn* losing truth out of sight.

[27] Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 3, pp. 266–268; vol. 4, pp. 650–651; vol. 5, pp. 451–453. Similarly, ʿAbbād ibn Sulaymān faced the question of the trustworthiness

one cannot help but conclude that that history was now adapted to the demands of faith rather than the other way around, and that the *mutakallimūn* gambled on most people not having as rigorous a mind as al-Ghazālī.

These double standards did not escape the notice of non-Muslim polemicists, who did not hesitate to point them out to their Muslim colleagues.[28] And yet, the discourse about trustworthy transmission remained an essential part of the polemic against the *Ahl al-Kītāb*. There is no doubt that it was this discourse itself, rather than its details, that had the polemical weight. After all, despite the fuss about the particulars, it was easy to maintain that Islam's roots were traceable and reliable, whereas Jews and Christians had lost their link with the past. Even if Islam could not prove its superior foundations, it could not be called inferior either, and this left Jews and Christians in the uncomfortable position of having no answer to the question of why they resisted conversion.[29]

In this light we may read the polemical works of ʿAlī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī, a ninth-century East-Syrian convert to Islam, who wrote during the time of al-Mutawakkil's attempts to strengthen Sunnī identity. He makes a point of distinguishing between the older nations that neglected their records and the nation of Islam that could retrace the fount of its knowledge in precise steps:

> Indeed, a man among the Arabs records, on authority of his grandfather, or the grandfather of his grandfather, or a man of his relatives, what they have seen and transmitted to their successors. As to your stories, they have been handed down to you by a man from ʿIrak, who took them from a man of Jazīrah, who in his turn took them from a man in Syria, who himself took them from an Hebrew; or by a Persian, who took them from a Greek; or by an Easterner who took them from a Westerner, through obscure and irregular channels.[30]

ʿAlī l-Ṭabarī depicts the growth of Christian tradition as confused and undependable because of the language barriers and geographical

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of miracles which are only known from ḥadīth (see: Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 4, pp. 41–42, p. 653, vol. 6 p. 237. He suggested that its transmitters are protected from error.

[28] See below: p. 26.

[29] This argument forms a thread through the treatise *Ifḥām al-Yahūd*, in which the Jew Samawʾal al-Maghribī (d. 1175) explains why he converted to Islam (see Perlmann, *Samauʾal al-Maghribī*) and is implicit in many Muslim writings against the *Ahl al-Kītāb*, for example in ʿAlī l-Ṭabarī's *Kītāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla* (see next footnote).

[30] Mingana, *ʿAlī Ṭabarī. The Book of Religion and Empire*, p. 162 (tr).

distances. He is, in effect, using a criterion of *isnād*-criticism. In the study of ḥadīth it was determined that a chain of transmitters (*isnād*) with people from different corners of the world betrayed its inauthenticity; ʿAlī l-Ṭabarī used it to cast doubt on the whole of Christian tradition.[31]

Several centuries later we encounter the precise mirror of this argument in the *Lamp of the Santuary* of the West-Syrian bishop and polymath Gregorius bar Hebraeus (d. 1286). He approaches the question of the transmission of tradition in ways very similar to his Muslim colleagues, even if in his case this is meant to serve as a proof of the Incarnation.[32] In the course of his exposition on Christian *tawātur* (in Syriac: *tkībūt sāhdūtā*) he asserts that the Christian religion has a miraculously strong historical basis, one of the proofs of which is that:

> its message was not preached by its preachers in a desert alone, nor amidst primitive men living in hairy tents or in small villages and settlements, but also in great illustrious cities such as Antioch, and the great Rome, and Egypt, and Athens, city of the wise, and all the other majestic cities.[33]

Rather than believing in the message revealed 'amidst primitive men', Bar Hebraeus regards the fact that his religion is deeply rooted in advanced societies, which have collectively preserved its tradition, as proof of its truthfulness. And, just like ʿAlī l-Ṭabarī, he insinuates that the other community's civilization is inferior.

However, in the clash of these two rock-solid traditions Muslim apologists still had a trump card to play, which overruled any detailed discussion of *tawātur* and which undoubtedly had a great psychological impact on Christians in the Near East. If Islamic beliefs and the historical reports on which they are founded were all false, then why would God have let Islam come to power in this world? How is it possible that a group of poor uncivilized barefooted carrion-eaters were capable of vanquishing the mighty Persians and Byzantines in battle?[34]

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[31] For Christians, on the other hand, it was the wide distribution of the Bible in many different languages that served as an argument *against* its falsification.

[32] See Chapter 2 and 3 of the section on the Incarnation in Khoury, 'Le Candélabre du Sanctuaire de Bar Hebraeus', pp. 29–121.

[33] Khoury, 'Le Candélabre du Sanctuaire de Bar Hebraeus', pp. 58–59 (ttr).

[34] This way of describing the conquerors is a topos in Muslim apologies; see the *Letter of 'Umar to Leo II*: Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulmane anonyme', p. 32 (*'ya'budūna l-awthān wa-ya'kulūna l-mayta wa-l-dam*'), p. 33 (*'ḥufāh 'urāh bi-ghayr 'udda wa-lā quwwa wa-*

Many Muslim polemicists drew attention to this extraordinary development and presented it as proof of God's support for their version of the truth.[35] Both the Umayyad Caliph ʿUmar II and the ʿAbbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd boast about Islam's remarkable victories in their letters to the Byzantine Emperors.[36] The East-Syrian apology entitled *Disputation of the monk of Bēt Ḥālē with an Arab notable* (henceforth: *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē*), which was probably written in the early eighth century, already presents the Muslim as confronting his interlocutor with this question. It shows that Christian apologists felt the need to address this propaganda point, and it was undoubtedly as much of a challenge as the Islamic message itself. In polemics against Islam, this argument was easily refuted, for example by drawing attention to the many powerful pagan nations of the past whose glory had vanished or by asking why so many Caliphs get murdered if God supports their rule.[37] But that did not alter the fact that it looked as though the power of the cross was fading away. It was the challenge of Christian apologists to explain to their own people what had happened.

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*lā silāḥ wa-lā zād*'); Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, p. 219: '*kunnā qawman ahl al-jāhiliyya naʿbudu l-aṣnām wa-naʾkulu l-maytа*' (the first Muhājirūn describing themselves to the Negus); *Letter of Hārūn al-Rashīd to Constantine VI*: Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab*, vol. 3, p. 244: '*ḥufāh ʿurāh ʿāla ikhwān al-dabar ahl al-wabar lā quwwa bi-him wa-lā manʿa lahum*'.

[35] Of course, there was no need for theologians to make this point, since it was undoubtedly a propaganda point from the early days of Islam onwards. During the first ʿAbbasid century more specific arguments were added to it. One point that the *mutakallimūn* made, for example, was that the victories had been foretold in the Qurʾan and by the Prophet; so that not only the victories themselves but also the prophecies about them constituted a proof of prophethood.

[36] ʿUmar's letter: Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulmane anonyme', p. 33 (t), p. 26 (tr); Hārūn's letter: Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab*, vol. 3, pp. 242–248, Eid, *Lettre du Caliphe Harun*, pp. 58–63 (tr).

[37] Counter-arguments are already to be found in the *Disputation of a monk of Bēt Ḥālē with an Arab notable*: MS Diyarbakir 95, fol. 8a–8b and similarly in the *Apology of al-Kindī*: Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 58–60, Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 159–160 (tr); subjection to foreign rule are explained as chastisement of God's people; needless to say that this is the apologetic extension of the polemical argument, in the sense that it includes an explanation of the purpose of these temporary dominations. Abraham of Tiberias adds to this the second argument: 'your rule is less than two hundred years old and you have already killed seven Caliphs, not one of whom was an enemy or opponent of Islam'; Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 328–329 (ttr).

*Christian defenses*

As we have seen, the political and military success of Islam in its founding centuries gave its defenders a free hand to advance two powerful and mutually reinforcing propaganda points: first, Islam was the result of a fresh revelation that set the corrupted religions straight; and second, it enjoyed the manifest support of God for that new community. In order to devise a convincing response to this manifesto, Christian apologists had to dig deeply into their creative resources. Some of the ways in which they applied themselves to the task of demonstrating the continuous validity of their tradition have already received attention in discussions above. In the following I will take a closer look at the modes of persuasion and types of argumentation in their works. We can distinguish several types of argumentation which circumvent the one critique of Christianity (i.e. its lack of trustworthy tradition and scripture) in order to properly address the other (i.e. the error of Christian doctrine). The works discussed below as examples use diverse apologetic methods in their argumentation, the one kind of apologetic reinforcing the other in the hope of building an impregnable defense of the Christian faith.

The first striking feature of the sources is that ancient apologetic methods were reinvented for the confrontation with Islam. Some apologists, for example, still hoped to prove the truth of the faith on the basis of Old Testament *testimonia*. Such *testimonia* make up a considerable part of the Melkite apologetic work entitled *Kitāb al-burhān*, for example.[38] Likewise, in the well-known refutation of Islam, which presents itself as a correspondence between a Muslim called ʿAbd Allāh al-Hāshimī and a Christian called ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, the author tries to show the moral superiority of Christianity not only by fashioning new arguments and finding new textual weapons, but also by quoting extensively from the Gospels.[39] However, the need to develop new ways in which their

[38] This work was attributed to Eutychius of Alexandria and published under his name, but is nowadays believed to be the work of Peter of Bayt Raʾs, who probably wrote in the second half of the ninth century. See: Samir, 'La littérature Melkite sous les premiers abbasides', pp. 482–484.

[39] This correspondence (henceforth: the *Apology of al-Kindī*) includes references to the court of al-Maʾmūn. It appears to be borrowing some passages from Abū Rāʾiṭa l-Takrītī (d.c. 835). Some scholars have not been willing to date the work to the first half of the ninth century, because they thought it was also dependent on Ibn al-Rāwandī, a former Muʿtazilī who wrote a virulent attack on the Qurʾan and who probably died in the early tenth century (see for example: Stroumsa, *Freethinkers in Medieval Islam*, pp. 193–198). However, as Griffith has argued, this dependence is not at all clear; Griffith,

traditions could appear to remain upright without merely reverting to their own scriptures was actually quite urgent, given that the scriptural and historical foundations of non-Muslim communities had been so severely cast in doubt.[40]

It is well known that the most extensive efforts in this respect entailed the reasoned defense of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The first ʿAbbasid century witnessed the bloom of Arabic Aristotelian philosophy, which members of all religious communities began to employ in defense of their perceptions of the Divine. Christian apologists, several of whom were also at the heart of translation movement, joined in on the philosophical-theological debates that followed. The use of the newly developed Arabic Aristotelian terminology was popular in these debates. Theologians used it to develop their expositions of the Trinity and the Incarnation, which centered on the question of the relationship between God's essence and His attributes. Proofs for the existence of a triad of attributes 'of essence', as opposed to attributes of action, was one of the fruits of this activity. This proposition was the starting point for discussions of the Incarnation, which came to be expressed predominantly in terms of its potentiality. To Muslim theologians the idea of God becoming man was not only offensive but also impossible, an opinion that a new discourse of philosophy could be made to support. Their Christian colleagues used the same language to explain how it was philosophically tenable that a union between the Divine and the human could occur.[41]

Three famous Christian 'controversialists' of the first ʿAbbasid century took it upon themselves to defend Christianity's most fundamental doctrines. These were the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra (d. after 829),

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'The Prophet Muḥammad', pp. 106–108, esp. p. 107, n. 1. At any rate, the work was in existence in the eleventh century, since al-Birūnī refers to it.

[40] The Syriac apologist Job of Edessa, active in the first half of the ninth century, explicitly refers to the need to look for non-scriptural arguments. In his *Book of Treasures*, he mentions that he composed a defense of Christianity which did not employ any scriptural proofs because they have no persuasive value in the eyes of non-Christians: Mingana, *Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, on p. 458 (t), p. 279 (tr). See also below, Ch. 4, pp. 123–125, for Job's argumentation against the Islamic view of heaven.

[41] See Thomas, 'Explanations of the Incarnation' for a detailed analysis of the ways in which such explanations were constructed and the extent to which the whole debate was dictated by Muslim questions. Having said in the introduction that many Eastern Christian apologists do not put their denominational identity in the spotlight, these discussions on the union of the Divine and the human in Christ obviously form an exception to that.

the East-Syrian ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī (ninth c.), and the West-Syrian Abū Rāʾiṭa l-Takrītī (d.c. 835).[42] These men were followed in the next century by the West-Syrian theologian Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (d. 974) who set out to refute the most extensive attack on Christianity yet produced, that written in the ninth century by Abū ʿĪsā l-Warrāq.[43]

Although Abū ʿĪsā l-Warrāq tried to raise the discussion to a pure philosophical level, Yaḥyā and his predecessors always combined different types of argumentation. Following in the footsteps of the early Christian apologists they often drew simple analogies from the natural world and the human body to demonstrate the possibility of something having one essence and three distinguishable but inseparable hypostases, such as the well-known example of the apple with its scent and taste or the sun with its light and heat.[44] More extensive narrative analogies were included in their works as well, which could explain the rationale behind certain aspects of Christ's life and Christian rituals. Such parables could explain why certain doctrines and disciplines were reasonable, even if that did not prove that they were divinely sanctioned. Among the issues that were explained in this way were the doctrine of the crucifixion, the habit of praying to the East and the veneration of the cross.[45]

In order to defend these and other Christian positions apologists needed to protect the core of the Christian faith against attacks from the outside. But together with this type of defense, they also advanced arguments which focused more directly on attacking the source of the attack, so to speak, in order to show that such critiques of Christianity had no legitimacy to begin with. One source of arguments to which they turned consisted of the very criteria which had been developed to establish the reliability of Muslim tradition. These could be used by Christians and other non-Muslims to silence the Muslim *mutakallimūn*.

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[42] The date of ʿAmmār's death is unknown but it is presumed that he lived in the same period or earlier, because according to Ibn al-Nadīm, Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf, who died in 840, wrote a treatise against him.

[43] Platti, *Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī. De l'Incarnation*; for Abū ʿĪsā l-Warrāq's refutation, see Thomas, *Early Muslim polemic*; *id*, *Anti-Christian polemic*. See Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 106–128 for a synthesis of the achievements of these apologists.

[44] A detailed analysis of the wide variety of analogies can be found in: Haddad, *La Trinité divine*, pp. 115–127.

[45] Two examples of ninth-century Melkite works teeming with such parables are the *Kitāb al-burhān* of Peter of Bayt Raʾs (See above: p. 23, n. 38) and the largely unedited massive apology entitled *al-Ǧāmiʿ wujūh al-īmān* (MS BL Or. 4950). See Roggema, '*Ḥikāyāt amthāl wa-asmār*' for a discussion of this.

In a discussion above, I have already drawn attention to one instance of this: the application of the notion of *ijmāʿ* (consensus) to the crucifixion. According to Muslim tradition, the widespread attestation of an event, which is then transmitted by opposing parties that cannot have conspired to spread false news about it, must yield knowledge about the event. If this principle was true for everyone and everything, and if the two opposed communities of the Jews and the Christians had indeed agreed on the crucifixion, then it was absurd to hold on to intra-Muslim consensus on its non-historicity.[46] Similar argumentation formed the basis of the defense of the integrity of the Hebrew Bible. Jews and Christians could never have conspired to tamper with its contents—by taking out references to the future appearance of the Prophet Muḥammad, for example—since these two communities were too hostile to each other to undertake such an action together. Thus no one could deny that the Hebrew Bible's agreed-upon form was also legitimate. Another example of such reasoning, already advanced by John of Damascus, was that if witnesses are needed to establish the truth of an event, then Muḥammad's revelations cannot be historical facts, since no one saw him receive the Qur'an.[47]

The soundness of Christian tradition could also be defended through simple argumentation, based on common sense. For example, against charges that Christians were insincere in their faith—to the point that they denied specific Islamic tenets which they knew to be true—Christian apologists had a ready answer. Their answer was that such reasoning was more applicable to Muslims themselves. One such charge was that Christians had deliberately omitted references to the Prophet from the Bible, thus turning their backs on the truth. Patriarch Timothy, in his famous debate with the ʿAbbasid Caliph al-Mahdī, took issue with this allegation. Calling the suggestion absurd, he went on to explain why: if there had been references to a future prophet in the Bible then everyone reading them would be awaiting him, and no one would have a reason to deny his coming.[48] Such psychologizing arguments were

[46] Similarly, Christian apologists confronted Jews with their consensus (*ijmāʿ*) on the fact that the Messiah has already appeared; the argument is to be found, among others, with Israel of Kashkar (d. 962) and Hibat Allāh ibn Athradī (mid-eleventh century). See: Samir, 'Bibliografie du Dialogue Islamo-chrétien (deuxième partie)', p. 215 and Holmberg, 'A refutation of the Jews', p. 141.

[47] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 134–135 (ttr); Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, pp. 76–77 (ttr).

[48] Mingana, 'Timothy's Apology', pp. 109–110 (t), pp. 35–36 (tr).

used readily in early Muslim-Christian debate.[49] Many Christian apologists pointed out that the problem of insincere motives in religious matters was really not their problem. It was rather the problem of Muslims, especially converts to Islam. The Christian *mutakallimūn* developed what has been described as the Christian counterpart to the Islamic 'Proofs of Prophethood'.[50] Time and again they stated that, just as there are heavenly signs through which one can recognize the true religion, there are also earthly signs through which one can recognize a religion that is not divinely sanctioned. Such a religion is not only spread by the sword, by bribes and by appeals to tribal solidarity, but it also produces no miracles. Lists of such negative attributes tended to be unspecific, without naming names, but no one would have doubted that they were references to Islam.[51] The force of this strand of apologetics is that it points its finger at the believers themselves, rather than at their religion; whoever converts to Islam is *a priori* condemned for doing this for some false and earthly motive. It also intimates that there is no correlation between the number of followers of a religion and the truth of its doctrines. That was an important point to make in times of rapid Islamization.

While the apologists kept on pointing out these signs of false religions in their *kalām* treatises, they also turned to other genres of writing in which they could illustrate the miraculous signs of the true faith and God's continued support for Christianity. Although some claimed that miracles were inferior to reason as the foundation of people's faith, His signs nevertheless continued to appear to the people of the day with considerable effect.[52] A relative of the Caliph who tries to shoot his arrow at an icon gets it back when the arrow turns and pierces his

[49] See also above, p. 18, for Muslim attempts to 'psychologize' the motives of Christians for *not* converting to Islam.

[50] Stroumsa, 'The Signs of Prophecy', p. 109.

[51] The theme is discussed elaborately in: Samir, 'La liberté religieuse chez les théologiens arabes chrétiens'; Griffith, 'Comparative Religion in the Apologetics', Stroumsa, 'The Signs of Prophecy'. The theme is also taken up in the oldest Jewish work of *kalām*, the ninth century *Book of the Twenty Chapters* of Ibn al-Muqammiṣ; Stroumsa, *Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ*, pp. 262–271 (ttr). Its continuing popularity can be observed with the thirteenth-century Coptic bishop Paul al-Būshī: Samir, *Traité de Paul de Būš*, pp. 231–251.

[52] See how the East-Syrian scientist and theologian Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043) argues that the impact of miracles is limited in time and space and that Christ had laid the foundation of the faith after which philosophers should construct rational proofs: *Fī l-ʿilm wa-l-aql*, in: Sbath, *Vingt traités philosophiques et apologétiques*, pp. 179–180 (t).

hand; a monk who drinks a cup of poison survives because he made the sign of the cross; other monks heal the sick and are able to gain favor with the Caliphs who know that they could never be healed by their own physicians.[53] Such ancient hagiographical and martyrological themes were employed to show that the truth was visible for whoever looked closely. According to some, then, truth was not to be found in the grand Muslim victories but rather in the small victories achieved by such holy men.

To make sure that this point did not escape the readers, it was often described how even Muslim rulers opened up their eyes to this very fact. In many disputations in which the defense of Christian doctrines is predominantly argumentative, this topos functions as a final proof of the fact that the Christian side has indeed won. Whether the Christian party goes home with a robe of honor, a promise to protect the Christians forever, or a mule's load of fish, in each case the finale of the account proves that the wise and mighty of the Muslim community more or less openly acknowledge the truth of Christianity.[54] Not only do these texts try to instill in their audience the sensational idea that many of the Muslim rulers are crypto-Christians, they also counteract the disturbing idea that God has given the rule to people who oppose Christianity. Although such themes at first sight seem nothing more than trivial literary topoi, they solidified the overall message of apologetic texts and urged the readers to look closely for the signs of the divine economy, before abandoning their faith.

Then there were other places where Christ's presence was unmistakable. In their search for types of proof which circumvent the awkward questions of the authenticity of Christian scripture and tradition, apologists also turned to the Qurʾan and Muslim tradition to find confirmations of their beliefs. Already in the earliest apologies we find instances

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[53] See among endless examples: Dick, 'La Passion Arabe de S. Antoine Ruwaḥ' Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 516–521 (ttr); Brock, 'A Syriac Life of John of Daylam'.

[54] al-Maʾmūn acknowledges Theodore Abū Qurra's victory and gives him a robe of honour etc: Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 125 (t); The Caliph 'Umar II, after reading the letter that the Byzantine Emperor sent to him, 'commenced to treat the Christians with much kindness', 'gave entire liberty to the captives' etc: Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', p. 330 (tr); George the Monk wins the favor of the Prince who presided over a Muslim-Christian disputation and is given a mule's load of fish etc: Carali, *Le Christianisme et l'Islam*, pp. 143–144, Nicoll, 'Account of a disputation', pp. ccccxlii–ccccxliii; there are many more examples.

of this approach. Both the author of the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē* and John of Damascus want to silence their opponents by drawing attention to the Qur'an's mention of God's Word and His Spirit.[55] Patriarch Timothy tells the Caliph al-Mahdī that the Qur'an contains veiled references to the Trinity. With such statements these early apologists set a trend for later generations, who produced many apologies in Arabic in which Qur'anic verses were adduced as arguments in support of the Christian faith. In the twelfth century a large collection of these verses even appeared in Syriac in the anti-Muslim tract of the West-Syrian polemicist Dionysius bar Ṣalībī (d. 1171).[56] Some may have seen these attempts to wring Christian truths out of the Qur'an and then claim them as this text's authentic message as an admission of weakness, if not defeat. However, there is no doubt that the greatest Christian apologists of the day found it worthwhile, in light of the undermined persuasive power of the Bible, to turn to the Qur'an as second best. Moreover, Christians invented a way of justifying their Qur'anic hermeneutics. They claimed that the Christian truths in the Qur'an, as well as all the elements that diverged from Christian doctrine, could be explained historically. This apologetic strategy, as we will see, plays a central role in the *Legend*.[57]

### *Counterhistory*

In summarizing the material presented above, it can be said that the methods of Christian apologetics consisted of philosophical argumentation, psychologizing argumentation, *Uṣūl al-fiqh*-like argumentation, narrative affirmation and proofs from Christian and Muslim scripture. There is one more defensive strategy that needs to be discussed. Christians also defended their faith and counteracted Islamic claims by appropriating Muslim tradition and shaping it according to what they understood to be Islam. One could see their renarrations of Islamic history as a countermove against the Islamic appropriation of the Biblical tradition. Some apologists excerpted traditional Muslim stories about

[55] For the central role of this Qur'anic understanding of Christ in Christian apologetic writings, see below: Ch. 4, pp. 104–113.

[56] Amar, *Dionysius Bar Ṣalībī*; Mingana, 'An Ancient Syriac Translation of the Kur'ān', Griffith, 'Dionysius bar Ṣalībī on the Muslims'.

[57] See the discussion in Ch. 5 below.

Muḥammad and let them speak for themselves in a desacralized context. By doing so they hoped to show that the life of the Prophet, as Muslims had recorded it, illustrated that Islam cannot supersede Christianity.

A plain example of how such renarrations could change the image of Muḥammad and his revelation is already to be found in the earliest responses to Islam. It is the account of the Prophet's marriage with Zaynab bint Jaḥsh. According to Muslim tradition, Muḥammad married Zaynab, even though she was married to Muḥammad's adoptive son Zayd ibn al-Ḥāritha.[58] In Q 33:37 God declares that there was no obstacle for Muḥammad to marry Zaynab once she was divorced from Zayd, or rather: God Himself gives Zaynab in marriage to Muḥammad. This is one of the most frequently repeated episodes in Eastern and Western Christian writings on Islam concerned with the life of the Prophet. Despite being just a minor event in Muḥammad's life, it was a *pars pro toto* proof for Christians that he was an opportunist and that his book was not really divinely revealed. Nothing much needed to be added to the story because it was felt that the Qur'an already admitted that it was problematic, even for Muḥammad's followers, to accept this divorce and nearly incestuous marriage.[59]

It is the new perspective that later commentators projected on such traditions, through a process we might call 'parasitical historiography', which ultimately reshaped their meaning. The traditions in question did not need to be authenticated. They needed no *isnād*, so to say, because the historical foundation was already laid by the historical memory of the community to whom the stories 'belonged'. Despite all the efforts of the scholars of the religious communities in the early Islamic period to formulate unambiguous criteria for historical verification, this procedure of 'parasitical' historiography slipped through the net. It is in itself a form of conspiracy—a conspiracy to agree with your opponent's history. This formed the core of this approach, but its aim was to establish an ostensibly well-founded historical base only to launch a radically different interpretation of that shared history. The intellectual historian Amos Funkenstein, who devoted much of his career to the study of Jewish-Christian polemics, identified this

[58] See for example: al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, part 22, pp. 10–11.

[59] The verse in question suggests that the marriage was divinely sanctioned 'so that there would be no fault with the believers'.

tendency to rewrite the history of rivaling communities as a specific phenomenon and called it *counterhistory*.[60] He defined it as:

> the systematic exploitation of the adversary's most trusted sources against their grain—'die Geschichte gegen den Strich kämmen'. Their aim is the distortion of the adversary's self-image, of his identity, through the deconstruction of his memory.[61]

This concise description lays bare the subversive and aggressive agendas of this type of writing. It cannot be stated emphatically enough, however, that these agendas are never explicit. Many counterhistories are deliberately constructed in such a way as to appear as innocent accounts of 'things that happened' rather than as attempts to distort the history of the other party. The fact that the counterhistorian targets the most valued sources of the rival community is nonetheless one of the ways in which he betrays himself. Since his main aim is to 'overthrow' another's accepted history, he will often focus on the foundational texts of the competing community, especially its foundation myths.

It should be clear that we have already come across one dramatic case of counterhistory: the Qur'an. When it presents a live discussion between Christ and God, as in Q 5:110–119, it constructs a reinterpretation of the life of Christ and Christian worship in the guise of a neutral rendition of a conversation. Muslim authors elaborated on the Qur'an's counterhistory of Christianity and used it as inspiration to write its early history. They attempted to unearth specific moments at which the early Church went astray from the path to which Christ had called believers. ʿAbd al-Jabbār's account of Christian origins is undoubtedly the most famous and most substantial in this respect, but there is an example from as early as the eighth century.[62] Sayf ibn ʿUmar described in his *Kitāb al-futūḥ al-kabīr wa-l-ridda* how Paul, as a king of the Jews, wanted to prevent Christians from becoming truly powerful and therefore confused and perverted their doctrine.[63] Three

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[60] Funkenstein, 'History, Counterhistory, and Narrative', (also in: Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, pp. 36–49).

[61] Funkenstein, 'History, Counterhistory, and Narrative', p. 69. The author points out that the genre can already be found in antiquity and gives the example of [pseudo-] Manetho's account of the origins of the Jews: pp. 69–71.

[62] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*; an interesting new study of this work, which focuses on how ʿAbd al-Jabbār rewrote early Christian history, is Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu*.

[63] Van Koningsveld, 'The Islamic Image of Paul'. The text of Sayf ibn ʿUmar is to be found on 222–224.

men influenced by his preaching, Malkūn, Yaʿqūb and Nasṭūr, began to follow Paul's feigned belief in Christ's divinity, while one man called al-Muʾmin, 'the Believer', denounced this heretical innovation and fled to Arabia, where his descendants survived till the advent of the Prophet.[64] This tale about the three duped progenitors of the Eastern Christian communities who unwittingly spread heresy remained popular in Muslim literature about Christianity, as it could, in all its simplicity, explain Islam's return to pre-Christian beliefs as well as the lack of unity among Christians.[65]

Funkenstein drew attention to a similar Jewish polemical legend about Christian origins: the *Toldoth Yeshu*.[66] It is an alternative life of Jesus in which he is described as an illegitimate child of a certain Miriam, who steals the Ineffable Name of God from the Temple. The magical powers that he acquires through his possession of God's Name enable him to fly in the air and to lead many astray. Judas Iscariot dissolves those supernatural powers by ejaculating on him, and when Yeshu's fraud is thus uncovered, he is crucified. Many elements of the Gospel versions of the life of Christ are recognizable in the text: his confrontation as a youngster with the Sages, his claim of fulfilling the Biblical prophecies concerning the Messiah, his miracles, the disappearance of his body from the grave, etc. But these elements are all scrambled and twisted so as to 'everse' the Gospel narratives.

According to Funkenstein, a text like the *Toldoth Yeshu* is founded on 'inverted exploitation', but he also regarded a wide range of works containing an 'explicit reinterpretation' of history as belonging to the genre of counterhistory.[67] However, as David Biale rightly argued, the more narrowly defined genre of writings whose backbone is formed by both the closeness to and the subversion of the respected sources of the targeted community deserves to be isolated from that more widespread phenomenon of historiography that contains revisionist interpretations of the 'canonical' past.[68] This specific genre of counterhistory does not present itself as a reinterpretation of past events, because it does not declare the author's intention. Quite to the contrary, it presents itself as

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[64] See below, Ch. 2, p. 37, p. 43, for the Islamic ideas about these 'Ur-Christians'.

[65] See Steenbrink, 'Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī', for a seventeenth-century Malay version of it.

[66] It exists in several versions. See among others: Krauss and Horbury, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy*, vol. 1, pp. 201–261, Schlichting, *Ein jüdisches Leben Jesu*.

[67] Funkenstein, 'History, Counterhistory, and Narrative', p. 73.

[68] Biale, 'Counter-History and Jewish Polemics', pp. 130–131.

historical *evidence* and deliberately, albeit often unsuccessfully, hides the fact that it is an attempt to reinterpret, an attempt to 'brush against the grain' (*gegen den Strich kämmen*). Such self-proclaimed 'pieces of evidence' are constructed to 'show' rather than to 'tell' and precisely that aspect puts them into a special category. Counterhistory is often, but not exclusively, employed by marginal groups who try to challenge the 'superficial' views of history of the majority, by bringing out a 'subterranean tradition'.[69] The genre is therefore fundamentally subversive, in that it challenges the intuitive conviction that the truth is in the hands of the majority. The most potent examples of it are obviously those that claim to be contemporaneous or even real eye-witness accounts or revealed scripture.[70]

Within the Eastern Christian literature about Islam we can find several pieces which constitute a counterhistory of Islamic origins. Predictably, they appropriate the historical accounts from a Muslim perspective and try to reshape them according to their own understanding of how Islam came into being. An example of such an account is the description of Muḥammad's mission found in a number of Syriac chronicles. In a nutshell it goes as follows: Muḥammad became acquainted with the land and faith of Palestine. He described its allure to his fellow tribesmen and told them that the Land of Milk and Honey is given to those who believe in one God. Then, by virtue of his successful raids in the Holy Land, especially the booty acquired there, he attracted many followers, who subsequently spread their conquests into other territories.[71]

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[69] Biale, 'Counter-History and Jewish Polemics', p. 130.

[70] An extreme case of an Islamic counterhistory in the guise of Scripture is the so-called Gospel of Barnabas, which one could well call 'the Gospel according to the Qur'an'. In it Christ avows the corruption of the Hebrew Bible and predicts the coming of Muḥammad. The text describes in unmistakable terms that Judas was crucified instead of Christ, who was himself taken straight up to heaven. See the text, with a study of its Islamic aspects, in: Cirillo et Frémaux, *Évangile de Barnabé*. For a discussion of the different opinions regarding the milieu in which this pseudo-Gospel originates, see: Slomp, 'The "Gospel of Barnabas" in Recent Research'.

[71] This account of early Islam can be found in slightly different wording in a number of Syriac chronicles that depend on the lost chronicle of Dionysius of Tellmahre (d. 845) which in its turn uses the work of Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785). See Hoyland, 'The earliest Christian writings on Muḥammad', pp. 279–281 for a translation of this account and a discussion of the dependence of later chronicles of Theophilus.

The above account purports to describe the genesis of Muḥammad's movement, but serves, in reality, to explain away its great success. The point is that people joined the movement for material gain; the conversion to the One God and His Prophet was their easy access to it. The message is clear enough, but one might ask what is counterhistorical about it. Or, to use Biale's term, where does its 'subterranean tradition' come to light? It is, of course, the false intentions of Muḥammad and his followers that are important here. The insinuation is that the Prophet lured his tribesmen into taking part in the raids. It suggests that, even though it may look as though the Holy Land was God-given to the Muslims, in reality it was taken. This twisting of intention that we can identify in this story is, in fact, a crucial aspect of many counterhistories. We have already come across Paul who preached Christianity in order to confuse the people, and Christ who performed miracles in order to lead people astray. The story of Muḥammad who presented 'revelation' in order to satisfy his personal desires works in the very same way. A key function of these tales is to deny the other community's capacity to recognize the drive behind their own belief system.

The *Legend of Sergius Baḥīrā*, which is discussed in detail in the following chapters and presented in Part II, is also an unmistakable case of counterhistory.[72] It consistently goes against the grain of the respected sources of Islam, but never explicitly so. It presents itself as an innocent account of a man who wandered around the desert and found a Christian there, who tells him his story. In reality, however, it is based on a prominent episode of Muḥammad's early life, as described in Muslim sources: his encounter with a Christian monk who recognizes him as the new prophet. This is turned into a story of how Muḥammad was secretly educated by this person. As archetypical counterhistory it builds its case primarily on Islamic tales, doctrines and Scripture. It is through its agreement with some key elements of Muslim sources that it tries to convince its audience of its interpretation—again interpretation in the guise of a simple 'eyewitness account'. The *Legend*'s most striking concurrence with the Muslim perception of the origins of Islam is the notion that God supported the Muslim conquests. But that agreement with the Muslim view of history is one of many tools at work whose

[72] It is no coincidence that Gottheil, long before the term 'counterhistory' was coined, already compared it to the *Toldoth Yeshu*. See: Gottheil, 'Christian Bahira legend', part 1, p. 189.

actual purpose is to undercut the basic religious message of Islam. How this works will be the subject of discussion in the following chapters. First of all, the Muslim traditions about Baḥīrā will be reviewed and analyzed, because before we can properly define and understand the *Legend* as counterhistory, we need to determine what the history is to which it attaches itself.

CHAPTER TWO

# THE ISLAMIC BAḤĪRĀ

According to the historical picture of the world at the dawn of Islam that emerges from the Qur'an and early Muslim literature, there were virtually no true Christians left in the early seventh century who had preserved the Gospel and lived rightly guided by the teachings of Christ. Nevertheless Muslim sources draw attention to a handful of surviving 'true Christians', whose faith was unaffected by the tainted scripture and the manmade doctrines of the Church. They had a special role to fulfill in the era leading up to the beginning of Muḥammad's mission. These Christians knew that a prophet was to appear in Arabia, and when he came in actual fact, they were among the first to recognize him and confirm that he was the expected messenger of God.[1]

One of the most famous of these 'true Christians' is Baḥīrā, who appears in both Muslim sources and the Christian *Legend* which is the subject of this study. It goes without saying that Muslims have an image of this monk that is radically different from the one found among Christians. In order to fully appreciate the Christian *Legend*, therefore, it is necessary to become acquainted with the Islamic tradition, since the polemical edges of the *Legend* come to the fore most prominently when it is juxtaposed with its Islamic counterpart. In what follows, I will give an overview of the various Islamic traditions about the monk and analyze their historiographical topoi and apologetic messages. Then, in a final discussion of how the Muslim stories relate to the Christian *Legend*, I will dispel some of the unfounded conclusions drawn in earlier scholarship about the historicity of the encounter between a monk and the Prophet and the interrelation between the Islamic and Christian stories.

It is first of all interesting to note that Baḥīrā can be encountered in many different genres of Islamic literature: in historiographical, bio-

[1] A survey of the great variety of accounts that describe the attestation of the young prophet by Christians, Jews, soothsayers, kings etc is to be found with Uri Rubin, *The eye of the Beholder*, pp. 44–55.

graphical and geographical works, but also in works of *tafsīr* and *asbāb al-nuzūl*, as certain Muslim exegetes believed that a small number of verses from the Qurʾan were revealed in reference to the monk. His miraculous recognition of Muḥammad was regarded as a 'sign of prophethood' and is therefore also included in the *dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* literature and polemical works against Jews and Christians. Best known are the traditions about Muḥammad and Baḥīrā in *sīra* literature. Most of Muḥammad's biographers relate that Muḥammad met him when he traveled to Syria as a child with his uncle and foster-father Abū Ṭālib. Al-Balādhūrī (d. 892) tells the following story in his *Ansāb al-ashrāf*:

> When the Prophet of God (peace be upon him) had reached the age of twelve, Abū Ṭālib once had to depart to Syria for trade. The Prophet of God (peace be upon him) had a close bond with him and he asked whether he could come with him. He refused, because he wanted to guard him and protect him. Then he was saddened and wept, so he let him come with him after all. Then one of the learned monks, whom they called 'Baḥīrā', saw him while a cloud gave him shade. He said to Abū Ṭalib: 'how is he related to you?' He answered: 'he is my nephew'. He said: 'did you not see how the cloud gives him shade and moves with him? By God, he is a noble prophet and I reckon that he is the one who was announced by Jesus. His time has drawn near and it is your duty to protect him'. Then Abū Ṭālib sent him back to Mecca.[2]

A more elaborate version of this story, contained in the *Sīra* of Ibn Isḥāq (d. c. 768), is the one that many later authors have followed.[3] It runs, in short, as follows: Baḥīrā is said to live in a cell (*ṣawmaʿa*)[4] in the Syrian town of Bosra. He possesses a book that has been handed down from generation to generation and which contained a description of the new prophet.[5] One day the monk receives the caravan of Meccan

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[2] al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. 1, pp. 96–97.

[3] The story is contained in two surviving redactions of Ibn Isḥāq's *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*: the well-known version of Ibn Hishām (d. 834), but also the one of Yūnus ibn Bukayr (d. 815) (see references in n. 6 below), and is therefore believed to have been part of Ibn Isḥāq's original *Sīra*.

[4] This term should not be understood as a cell that is part of a larger monastic complex, but rather as the dwelling place of a solitary monk and probably a vertical, tower-like structure: Monferrer Sala, 'A propósito de un pseudoarabismo'.

[5] The Muslim doctrine that Muḥammad's description as well as prophecies concerning his advent are to be found in the Bible gave rise to extensive perusal of its text, but this belief was overshadowed by the doctrine of the corruption and falsification of the Bible (*taḥrīf*) (See Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, Ch. 2 and 4). In this respect it deserves to be stressed that the monk's book is not explicitly said to be the Bible, even if it is sometimes understood in this way. The text is too vague to suggest that the monk

traders and sees a miraculous shade above Muḥammad's head. He decides to invite the whole crowd for a meal, but he soon notices that Muḥammad has been left outside and calls for him to be brought in.[6] His premonition that this is the future prophet is confirmed by the answers that Muḥammad gives to his questions and by the 'seal of prophethood' that he discovers on his back. He asks Abū Ṭālib how he is related to the boy. When he answers that he is his father, Baḥīrā corrects him, as he knows miraculously that Muḥammad's father is not alive anymore. He then urges Abū Ṭālib to protect Muḥammad from the Jews and to go back to Mecca. Indeed just at that moment, three of the 'People of the Book', Zurayr, Tamīm and Darīs arrive at Baḥīrā's cell asking for the prophet, but Baḥīrā forces them to accept that there is no way to change what God has destined for the child.[7]

There is another frequently encountered account that runs parallel to this one. It is not contained in the redactions of Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra* but can be found with al-Ṭabarī, al-Tirmidhī, and several other authors. Here the monk is more explicit when foretelling Muḥammad's destiny. When encountering Muḥammad he immediately calls him 'apostle

possessed an old Bible: 'a book that was in the cell, so they allege, handed on from generation to generation'. On the other hand, Ibn Isḥāq does assert that the Emperor Heraclius recognized Muḥammad's prophethood from Scripture: Leder, 'Heraklios erkennt den Propheten', p. 35. Pseudo-al-Wāqidī is one of few Muslim authors who is more explicit and suggests that Baḥīrā recognized Muḥammad as the one of whom Christ has foretold. See al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, part 2, p. 19.

[6] This element appears to be patterned on the Biblical story of Samuel's anointment of David. When Samuel meets all of Jesse's children and sees that none of them is chosen, he asks Jesse whether he has more children. Jesse replies (1 Sam 16: 11): 'There is still the youngest but he is looking after the sheep', after which Samuel calls for him to be brought in. See: Waqtendonk, 'Groen licht voor een nieuwe godsdienst', p. 67.

[7] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 115–117; Ibn Bukayr, *Kitāb al-siyar wa-l-maghāzī*, pp. 73–76, followed by poetry about the event (pp. 76–78). Also with: Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 1, pp. 99–101; al-Ṭabarsī, *I'lām al-warā*, pp. 17–19, al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, vol. 2, pp. 26–29; Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, pp. 168–170, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, vol. 1, pp. 21–23; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol 1, part 2, pp. 283–284; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā*, pp. 141–143; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, vol. 2, pp. 58–60. See Monferrer Sala, 'Un texto de base polemista' for the textual witness in *I'lām bi-mā fī dīn al-Naṣārā min al-fasād wa-l-awhām wa-izhār maḥāsin dīn al-Islām wa-ithbāt nubuwwat Muḥammad* by al-Imām al-Qurṭubī; al-Kalā'ī, *Kitāb al-iktifā'*, vol. 1, pp. 252–256; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *'Uyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, pp. 52–54. Shorter versions of the story are told by al-Maqdisī (*Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, part 4, vol. 2, p. 134) and by al-Ṭabarī, (*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 1, pp. 1123–1125). A short account in *saj'* is to be found with the fourteenth century biographer Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muqtafā min sīrat al-muṣṭafā*, p. 40.

of the Lord of the Worlds', after he has seen the trees and stones all the way from al-ʿAqaba prostrate before him. One of the striking differences with Ibn Isḥāq's tradition is that Baḥīrā now warns the crowd that they should protect Muḥammad from the Byzantines rather than from the Jews. His prediction promptly materializes when seven Byzantines arrive wanting to slay the prophet destined to appear that very month.[8] Abū Ṭālib summons Abū Bakr and Bilāl to take Muḥammad back to Mecca, and Baḥīrā supplies them with provisions for the trip home.[9]

Most biographers describe another trip to Syria at a later date—an etiological story that serves to give a spiritual tinge to the Prophet's marriage to Khadīja.[10] She sends her slave Maysara to Syria to sell her goods and Muḥammad joins him. When Muḥammad sits down under a tree, a monk appears who declares that only prophets have ever sat under that tree. He asks Maysara whether Muḥammad has 'redness' in his eyes, and when Maysara confirms this, the monk is convinced that this is the 'Last of the Prophets'. Muḥammad then sells his goods for a remarkably high price. When the two young men then return to Mecca in the blazing midday heat (*al-hājira*), Muḥammad is protected from the sun by two angels. When Khadīja hears from Maysara about these miraculous events she proposes marriage to Muḥammad.

Not all biographers specify the name and the geographical setting of the monk. He is often 'a certain monk' (*rāhib min al-ruhbān*).[11] Some however call the monk 'Nasṭūr' or 'Nasṭūrā'. This is to be found

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[8] The story is unmistakably modeled on the gospel story about Herod's attempts to capture the newly-born King of the Jews (Matt 2).

[9] al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 590–591, al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 1, pp. 1125–1126; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, p. 479; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol 1, part 2, pp. 284–286; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (without the reference to Bilāl and Abū Bakr): *Hidāyat al-ḥayāra*, pp. 140–141; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, vol. 2, pp. 24–25; Abū Nuʿaym, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, pp. 170–172; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, pp. 54–55; Al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islam*, vol. 2, pp. 55–56. Al-Ṣafadī refers to the event briefly and combines the two accounts. He writes that Muḥammad's age was 'twelve years, two months and ten days': *Kitāb al-wāfī bi l-wafayāt*, vol. 1, pp. 57–58. Ibn al-Athīr also created a combination of the two accounts: Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīkh*, vol 1, pp. 567–568.

[10] For the references see the footnotes below.

[11] al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 1, pp. 1127–1128; Ibn Bukayr, *Kitāb al-siyar wa-l-maghāzī* pp. 81–82; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 293–294, Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-taʾrīkh*, vol 1, p. 569 and *id*, *Usd al-ghāba*, vol. 7, p. 80, Al-Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, pp. 159–160; al-Bayhaqī, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, vol. 2, pp. 65–67.

already with Ibn Saʿd who presents the story twice.[12] Yet the name of the monk also appears as Baḥīrā.[13] The 'sign of prophethood' in this account is 'redness' in the eye of Muḥammad, but again we find an alternative, much simpler account, in which the miraculous aspect is food that does not run out.[14] In this version the location is only said to be in al-Shām, with some it is again Bosra, sometimes specified as 'close to Baḥīrā's cell'.

Not only is there great diversity in the details of these well-known accounts, there are many similar stories found scattered through *sīra* literature. For example, Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt* includes three shorter and less miraculous traditions about Muḥammad meeting a monk in Syria, apart from the more frequently occurring stories described above. One of these traditions mentions Baḥīrā, another one only refers to 'a monk', and a third one describes two abbots who independently of one another other declare that Muḥammad has 'the eye of a prophet' and 'the face of a prophet'.[15]

Ibn Saʿd writes furthermore that Muḥammad was already recognized as a prophet when his grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was still alive, that is to say, before Muḥammad became nine years old. The account quotes ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib as saying that he had found Muḥammad near the lote-tree (*al-sidra*) with some youngsters from the 'People of the Book', and that they had claimed that he was a prophet of this community.[16] Al-Māwardī (d. 1058), who includes a hybrid version of two

[12] Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 1, pp. 82–83, pp. 102–103. Also with: al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*, p. 305; Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muqtafā min sīrat al-muṣṭafā*, p. 46; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, pp. 61–63; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 16, pp. 95–97; al-Kalāʿī, *Kitāb al-iktifāʾ fī maghāzī*, vol. 1, pp. 258–262; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, vol. 1, p. 24; Abū Nuʿaym, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, pp. 172–174, al-Kalāʿī, *Kitāb al-iktifāʾ*, vol. 1, pp. 258–262; al-Qāḍī ʿIyād speaks of Baḥīrā and Naṣṭūr al-Ḥabasha (!) and *ṣāḥib Buṣrā* as all having recognized Muḥammad: al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *al-Shifāʾ bi-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*, vol 1, part 1, p. 240.

[13] Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 1, p. 177, referring to *Sharaf al-muṣṭafā* by Abū Saʿīd al-Nīsābūrī; al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn*, vol. 1, p. 133. In the apologetic work *The Letter of Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī to the Christians of Cyprus* the two monks appear together, as if they witnessed the young prophet in Bosra at the same time. The author merges the various miraculous happenings. See: Ebied and Thomas, *Muslim-Christian Polemic*, p. 176 (t), p. 177 (tr).

[14] Maysara tells Khādija 'I ate with him until we were satisfied but the food remained as it was'; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, vol. 1, p. 97; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, pp. 77–78.

[15] Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 1, pp. 76, pp. 98–99.

[16] Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 1, p. 54.

of the accounts about Baḥīrā in his *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*,[17] likewise mentions an earlier attestation of Muḥammad's prophethood by Christians. According to him, a group of Christians came from Syria to Mecca for trade and stayed between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa. When they met the seven-year old Muḥammad, they marveled at his belief in the One God and proclaimed his prophethood.[18]

Yet another tradition, told on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, tells us that Baḥīrā once met Muḥammad while accompanied only by Abū Bakr. Muḥammad sits down under a lote-tree and the monk tells Abū Bakr that no one has sat there since Christ did. This event is said to have taken place when Muḥammad was twenty and Abū Bakr eighteen. It serves to illustrate that Abū Bakr knew about Muḥammad's call and was already faithful during the twenty years prior to Muḥammad's first revelation.[19] Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1272) tells this story in his *tafsīr* as the background to the revelation of the words 'when he reaches the age of full strength' (Q 46:15).[20] On this occasion the monk is anonymous, but he does mention the name of Baḥīrā in relation to the verse 'Those to whom We sent the Book before this—they believe in it' (Q 28:52). This verse, he writes, was revealed in reference to the 'Christian scholars who converted to Islam' and who came from Abyssinia and Syria to Medina with Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.[21] Al-Qurṭubī calls one of them 'Baḥīrā the monk', so he probably has the monk who recognized Muḥammad in mind. In the older *tafsīr* of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767), who gives the same 'occasion for revelation' for this verse, he is only called 'Baḥīrā'.[22] Some exegetes noticed that there was an anomaly there, for Baḥīrā was said not to have lived till the beginning

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[17] Al-Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, p. 155.

[18] Al-Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, p. 154.

[19] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, vol. 1, p. 199, and Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 1, p. 177, who notes that it is a weak tradition cited by Ibn Manda from the tafsīr of ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Saʿīd al-Thaqafī on authority of Ibn ʿAbbās; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 16, p. 194; al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, p. 322 (in these two sources the monk is anonymous).

[20] al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 16, p. 194. Also with: al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, p. 322.

[21] al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 13, p. 296: '*wa-hum arbaʿūna rajulan, qadamū maʿa Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Madīna, ithnān wa-thalāthūna min al-Ḥabasha wa-thamāniyat nafar aqbalū min al-Shām wa-kānū aʾimmat al-Naṣārā: Baḥīrā l-rāhib wa-Abraha wa-l-Ashraf wa-ʿĀmir wa-Ayman wa-Idrīs wa-Nāfiʿ*'.

[22] Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, vol. 3, p. 349: '*wa-thamāniya qadamū min al-Shām: Baḥīrā, wa-Abraha wa-l-Ashraf, wa-Durayd wa-Tamīm wa-Ayman wa-Idrīs wa-Nāfiʿ*'. Muqātil's exegesis of Q 28:52 was adduced by Sprenger who was intent on showing that Baḥīrā

of Muḥammad's prophetic mission.[23] Therefore they concluded that this was another Baḥīrā. Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), for example, gives them two separate entries in his biographical work *Usd al-ghāba*.[24]

The Qur'anic verse best known for its praise of Christians, Q 5:82 ('you will surely find the nearest of them in love to you those who say: "we are Christians". And that is because there are amongst them priests and monks and they are not proud') was also applied to Baḥīrā. Al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075) tells us that this was in fact the verse that alluded to the men returning from Abyssinia, including 'Baḥīrā l-rāhib'.[25] In his *al-Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā*, al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869) stresses that these words were revealed in reference to genuine Christians of 'the type of Baḥīrā and the monks whom Salmān used to serve'. He deplores the fact that the 'sectarian' Christians of his time, who to him were clearly not well-intentioned vis-à-vis the Muslims, adduce this verse as referring to themselves.[26]

Quite a different tradition about Baḥīrā is to be found with Ibn Qutayba (d. 889). In his *Kītāb al-maʿārif* he includes the monk in the list of 'faithful people before the mission of the Prophet'. He writes that in the time just before Islam a voice was heard at night proclaiming that 'the three best people on earth are Baḥīrā, Riʾāb al-Shannī and one who has not yet come.' He explains that 'the one who has not yet come' is the Prophet and that whenever anyone of Riʾāb's descendents dies and is buried, there is always soft rain (*ṭashsh*) to be seen on his grave.[27]

It is quite striking to see the divergence of opinion about the monk's supposed origin and the location of his monastery. Al-Masʿūdī (d. 957)

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had spent time in Mecca. See the references below: p. 52, n. 61. A reference to a convert to Islam called 'Baḥīr (sic) the Monk' can be found in Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 32.

[23] Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, vol 1, p. 28 and p. 143; al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn*, vol. 1, p. 135.

[24] Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, vol. 1, pp. 199–200.

[25] al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, pp. 167–168.

[26] Finkel, *Three Essays*, p. 14 (t); Finkel, 'A Risāla of al-Jāḥiẓ', p. 324 (tr). 'Salmān' refers to Salmān al-Fārisī, the Zoroastrian who was drawn to Christianity, and learnt, while visiting monks all around the Near East, that a prophet was to arise in Arabia to revive the true religion of the Ḥanīfiyya. See: Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 136–143.

[27] Ibn Qutayba, *Kītāb al-maʿārif*, p. 35, repeated by Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol 1, part 2, p. 286; similarly with al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 1, pp. 132–133 (ttr), al-Maqdisī, *Kītāb al-bad' wa-l-taʾrīkh*, part 5, vol. 3, p. 122 (calling him Urbāb); Ibn Durayd has a similar tradition, but without the name of Baḥīrā: *al-Ishtiqāq*, pp. 325–326.

states that he belonged to the tribe of ʿAbd al-Qays.[28] This puts him on the map much further east than Syria, since this tribe lived in the area of Bahrayn. It is hard to judge whether this is based on a tradition unknown to us, or whether he arrives at this conclusion on the basis of the tradition about 'the three best people on earth' that Ibn Qutayba and others narrated. The first, Riʾāb al-Shannī was said to belong to ʿAbd al-Qays, and al-Masʿūdī may have associated Baḥīrā with him.[29] Al-Masʿūdī was also the first Muslim author to record that 'Baḥīrā is called Sergius by Christians'.[30]

Al-Suhaylī (d. 1185) in his commentary on Ibn Isḥāq's *al-Sīra l-nabawiyya*, presents a completely different origin. He states that al-Zuhrī claims in his *Siyar* that Baḥīrā was a rabbi with the Jews of Taymāʾ.[31] This is, in all likelihood, the result of the confusion of two different stories: the one about Baḥīrā and the other a story, told by or attributed to al-Zuhrī (d. 742), about an anonymous rabbi in Taymāʾ who warned Abū Ṭālib not to take Muḥammad to Syria because the Jews were determined to kill him.[32]

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[28] al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 1, p. 146 (ttr).

[29] Virtually nothing is known about this Riʾāb, but a passage in al-Ṭabarī's *History*, in which he mentions the death of Suwayd b. Riʾāb al-Shannī during the second Arab civil war, suggests that he was a historical figure; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 2, p. 683. Ibn Ḥazm claimed that Riʾāb was considered a prophet by his own people: Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab*, p. 282.

[30] al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 1, p. 146 (ttr).

[31] al-Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-unuf*, vol. 2, p. 220.

[32] al-Zuhrī, *al-Maghāzī l-nabawiyya*, pp. 40–41 (this is a reconstruction of al-Zuhrī's work from later sources; as a unity the work did not survive. See Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, p. 25). There is reason to assume that the Baḥīrā stories are modeled on this story, for the command 'do not take him to Syria' makes more sense in a setting where Abū Ṭālib and the Prophet have not reached Syria yet. Just as al-Suhaylī, Ibn al-Jawzī also gives this rabbi the name of the monk, and writes: 'when the Prophet was twelve years and two months and ten days, he traveled with Abū Ṭalib towards Syria. They stopped in Taymāʾ with a rabbi of the Jews, called 'Baḥīrā the monk'. He said to him: 'who is that boy with you?' and he answered 'my nephew'. So he said: 'do you care for him?'. He said: 'yes'. And he said: 'by God, do not go with him to Syria because the Jews will kill him'. So he took him back to Mecca'; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-ṣafwa*, p. 19. It is interesting to note that 'x number of years and two months and ten days' is a formula frequently used by Muslim biographers to give a sense of precision. See for example Ibn Ḥabīb: when the Prophet was eight years and two months and ten days his grandfather died; (Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, p. 10) and Ibn Sayyid al-Nās: the Prophet married Khadīja twenty-five years and two months and ten days after the Day of the Elephant (*ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, p. 61). I have already noted another instance of it above (p. 40, n. 9) with al-Ṣafadī, who uses it on numerous other occasions as well.

As for the monastery in which the monk Baḥīrā was supposed to have lived, the geographical handbooks contain a wide range of names. Yāqūt (d. 1229) gives three different monasteries in which he was said to have met Muḥammad. All three are in the area of Bosra.[33] One is simply called 'Dayr Buṣrā' and described as a monastery of Christian Arabs belonging to the Banū Ṣādir.[34] The other ones are Dayr Najrān and Dayr al-Bāʿiqā.[35] The latter is mentioned also by al-Harawī (d. 1215) and later appears with al-ʿUmarī (d. 1349) as 'Dayr al-Nāʿiqī'.[36] Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 1176) locates Baḥīrā in a village called 'Kafr', six miles from Bosra, which, he says, was renamed 'Dayr Baḥīrā',[37] but he adds that some people claim that he lived in the Balqā' in a village called 'Mayfaʿa', passed 'Zayzā''. This can be identified as present-day Umm al-Raṣāṣ in Jordan, the ancient Kastron Mefaa.[38] The claim that he in fact lived in this place may well be based on the confusion of two stories in the biography of the Prophet, the one about Baḥīrā and the one about an anonymous monk who predicted the appearance of the Prophet to Zayd ibn ʿAmr, the *ḥanīf* who sought the religion of Abraham shortly before the Prophet's mission. The dwelling place of this particular monk was, according to Ibn Hishām and others, the region of Balqā', in a place called 'Mayfaʿa'.[39] We must assume that Ibn ʿAsākir's source(s) believed these two monks to be one and the same person.

It is perhaps interesting to mention that there are also biographers of the Prophet which leave out the Baḥīrā stories completely, perhaps for reasons of brevity, or perhaps because they considered them apoc-

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[33] Today a ruined basilica on the south-west side of Bosra is associated with Baḥīrā. See: Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich, *Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam*, vol. 1, p. 208; Sartre, *Bostra des origines à l'Islam* (photographs); Mougdad, *Bosra. Guide historique*, pp. 31–34.

[34] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 2, pp. 500–501.

[35] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, vol. 2, p. 539, p. 499.

[36] Sourdel-Thomine, *Al-Harawī, Guide*, p. 43; al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, pp. 124–125. Otherwise this monastery is unknown. It is plausible that the name is related to the place Qaṣr al-Bāʿiq, which lies on a trade route twenty kilometres south of Bosra, as Shahid has suggested, in: *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, p. 297, n. 312.

[37] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 71, p. 338.

[38] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 71, p. 338. Ibn Kathīr refers to Ibn ʿAsākir, but gives the incorrect 'Manfʿa passed Zayra'. See: Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol 1, part 2, pp. 229–230. That this town was an important Christian center is shown by recent excavations of a number of churches. See: Piccirillo, *l'Arabia Cristiana*, pp. 231–237 and passim.

[39] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 148–149; al-Kalāʿī, *Kitāb al-iktifāʾ*, p. 321; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn al-athar*, vol. 1, pp. 80–81.

ryphal. Al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 897) only dryly mentions a trip of Muḥammad to Bosra at the age of nineteen, while Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) passes over this episode completely in his biography of the prophet.[40] The East-Syrian convert to Islam, ʿAlī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī, who wrote one of the earliest works of *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, does not mention the event either, despite the fact that he devotes attention to the 'seal of prophethood', which according to him was foretold in Isaiah 9:6: 'unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given, whose government is on his shoulder'.[41] ʿAbd al-Jabbār also omits the story in his work of this genre, *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*.

One of the Muslim historians who did include the traditions but nevertheless questioned their historicity was al-Dhahabī (d. 1348). In his massive work *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, he reviews several of versions of the Baḥīrā episode but also calls them *munkar jiddan*. One of his reasons for considering them apocryphal was that if Muḥammad had already understood early on in his life that he was going to be a prophet, he would not have been in shock when Gabriel first began to convey God's revelations to him.[42]

The above survey of the principal traditions concerning Muḥammad's meeting with a monk reveals the great divergence between the different accounts. The various versions of these stories differ time and again as to Muḥammad's physical signs of prophethood, his age, his company, and the miraculous happenings during the event. The eagerness with which the earlier biographers worked on Muḥammad's infancy stories and disseminated increasingly contradictory accounts was clearly a thorn in the side of later biographers, who took stock of a wide variety of sources and wanted to fix the exact history of Muḥammad's life. For example Ibn Kathīr's (d. 1373) and al-Ḥalabī's (d. 1635) inventories of the traditions show that their harmonization is an impossible task.[43]

For the modern reader, by contrast, the diversification of the stories is interesting in its own right. One detects the presence of a number

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[40] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 2, p. 14; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jawāmiʿ al-sīra l-nabawiyya*.

[41] Mingana, *ʿAlī Ṭabarī. The Book of Religion and Empire*, p. 95 (tr). For other Muslim authors and their comments on Biblical verses that foretold the mark on Muḥammad's shoulder, see: Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, pp. 103–104.

[42] al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, vol. 2, p. 57.

[43] Both sources are as such good surveys of the different traditions; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol 1, part 2, pp. 283–286; al-Ḥalabī, *Insān al-ʿuyūn*, pp. 130–135, pp. 147–149.

of topoi, the plausible motivations behind the proliferation of the traditions and the gradual sharpening of the evidentiary features of the supposed events. To begin with that latter phenomenon, we can observe that the Baḥīrā story of Ibn Isḥāq is already the outcome of a process of apologetic refinement that enhances the miraculous nature of the encounter. Whereas in the simple account preserved by al-Balādhurī, quoted above, Baḥīrā still needs to ask how the boy is related to his uncle, with Ibn Isḥāq he asks it only to show his mysterious foreknowledge of the correct answer.[44] The incorporation of the reference to an ancient book in Baḥīrā's cell is also an added feature, which is meant to reveal the primeval documentation of the boy's prophetic traits.

The description of the shade-miracle gives the impression that Ibn Isḥāq's tradition is not only an embellished version of an older tradition but also an amalgamation of different stories. This can be noticed when looking at the miraculous shade. First of all a cloud provides shade to the young boy, but then the branches of a tree move to give him shade as well. The overlapping of two accounts produces the overlapping of two shades, and the resulting description is difficult to picture:

> [Baḥīrā] saw the apostle of God in the caravan when they approached, with a cloud overshadowing him among the people. Then they came and stopped in the shadow of a tree near the monk. He looked at the cloud when it overshadowed the tree, and its branches were bending and drooping over the apostle of God until he was in the shadow beneath it.[45]

The mushrooming of attestation stories in the *sīra* literature can be better understood when we realize that the significance of the encounter scene stretches further than the enactment of the 'Proofs of Prophethood' and the Christian recognition of Islam. Uri Rubin has convincingly argued that the proliferation of these and other 'attestation accounts' can be largely explained as the result of many believers' wish to claim their ancestors' conversion as very early. Their supposed presence on the scene when Baḥīrā recognized Muḥammad's prophethood represents, let us say, their 'proto-conversion', and in the case of the

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[44] This is a motif that will be discussed further below.

[45] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, p. 115; translated by Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 80. The oddity of this element in the story was already noticed by al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, vol. 2, p. 57, who was sceptical about the historical value of these infancy myths. For the many tree-miracles during Muḥammad's life, see for example al-Māwardī who devotes a whole chapter to them in his work about Muḥammad's prophethood: *A'lām al-nubuwwa*, pp. 123–128. See also: Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds*, pp. 49–50.

Baḥīrā tradition, we see indeed how the presence of Abū Bakr on the scene is mentioned by those who want to refute the claim that ʿAlī was the first Muslim.[46] This is undoubtedly also the background to the above-mentioned story about the encounter under the lote-tree, when Muḥammad was accompanied by Abū Bakr only. Ibn ʿAsākir even relates that Abū Bakr once met Baḥīrā without Muḥammad being there. He told the monk about dreams he had had, and Baḥīrā explained them as references to the forthcoming Prophet and Abū Bakr's own subsequent position as caliph.[47] These traditions about Abū Bakr can certainly be regarded as counterweights to the presence of ʿAlī's father in the story of Ibn Isḥāq. There is little doubt that the sudden appearance of Abū Bakr and his slave Bilāl at the end of the Baḥīrā tradition contained by al-Tirmidhī had such a motive behind it too. That their presence created an anachronism was already noted by Ibn Kathīr and al-Dhahabī, who recognized that Abū Bakr would have been far too young to chaperone Muḥammad, let alone that Bilāl could have been present, as Abū Bakr only acquired him as a slave after the beginning of Muḥammad's mission.[48]

With the story of Nasṭūr's recognition of Muḥammad one likewise finds a transparent motivation for its narration, and probably its invention: it serves to give Khadīja's decision to marry Muḥammad a spiritual touch. If we read the sources that do not include this encounter and only refer to the success of this business trip, such as al-Maqdisī's *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, Khadīja's decision could potentially be interpreted as greed. Muḥammad was after all said to have made a remarkable profit during his expedition. One understands how this suggestion regarding their courtship would have to be avoided.[49]

Not only in the encounter stories themselves do we detect such motivations. The diversity of monasteries that are recorded as having been Baḥīrā's home also alert us to the possibility that traditions have been invented locally. Obviously the prestige of a monastery would be enhanced if it were believed to be a place that the Prophet had visited.[50]

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[46] Rubin, *The eye of the Beholder*, pp. 50–51.

[47] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 71, p. 339.

[48] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, vol 1, part 2, pp. 285–286; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, vol. 2, p. 57.

[49] al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, part 4, vol. 2, pp. 137–138.

[50] More generally speaking, there is also reason to assume that the reference to Bosra, and Syria in general, as the places where Muḥammad was first recognized as a prophet was in all likelihood the result of Syria's political self-promotion under the

In connection with this duplication process of the encounter stories we may take a closer look at the question of the frequent divergences amongst the accounts. One easily gets the impression that Muḥammad's encounter with the monk was felt to have such a solid symbolical message that it allowed for the narration of its circumstances to be fluid. In other words, it does not seem to matter whether Muḥammad was eight years old, or twelve or nineteen years old. Most of the variation in detail, however, should not be regarded as the accident of storytelling. When taken together, the description of the encounters contain, amongst others, a list of different wondrous phenomena involving a tree.[51] It would be naïve to assume that the narrators remembered that something happened with a tree but forgot what it was exactly or did not care about the details. It is more likely that the divergences are intentional. The variation is caused, as we have seen, by the inclusion of different people on the scene. The alteration of Muḥammad's company obviously creates new, separate, events, and if the tree-phenomenon during a new event had been described as the same, the problem of the relation between the different events would come to the fore more clearly, and suggest more readily that an a-historical duplication process was taking place. The slight variation in both supernatural and ordinary circumstances is a solution to that problem. Once the basic notion of a tree or shade miracle, or the discovery of a physical sign of prophethood, had become inextricably bound up with the Baḥīrā scene, a variation on that theme would even enhance the sense of historicity on the basis of its close counterpart rather than undermine the credibility of both.[52]

Comparison of the various Baḥīrā stories with similar traditions about Muḥammad's early years reveal the presence of a number of topoi. These elements are—in contrast to the many fluctuating elements—

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Umayyads. However, the traditions about the encounter are absent in the most famous collections of *Faḍā'il al-Shām*, such as the ones by al-Rabaʿī and al-Samʿānī. See for example the collection of several *Faḍā'il al-Shām* works: Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿĀdil b. Saʿd, *Faḍā'il al-Shām*.

[51] As we have seen: a tree moving its branches, a tree under which only prophets have sat, a tree under which nobody has sat since Christ, and trees prostrating. See also above, p. 47, n. 45.

[52] That the *sīra* literature fails to address the problem of the relation between overlapping and contradictory events is evident; for the processes behind the growth of the huge body of early Islamic works with so little historical substance see: Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, pp. 3–17.

stable and formulaic. We have already come across the topos of the admonition to protect Muḥammad from the Jews. This features in Ibn Isḥāq's version of the Baḥīrā story and also in the tradition about the rabbi of Taymā' that was transmitted by al-Zuhrī.[53] In another *Sīra* work, the *Kitāb al-iktifā'* by al-Kalā'ī (d. 1237), it is the Yemeni king Sayf ibn Dhī Yazān who gives that warning,[54] as does the bishop of Najrān. The bishop, who is said to have been 'a friend of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib', was just telling him what the Prophet of the Sons of Ishmael was predicted to look like, when right at the moment the boy arrives. He recognizes him, verifies his particular bodily features and confirms his prophethood. This is followed by a topos to which I have already drawn attention. The bishop asks 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib how he is related to the boy. Just as Abū Ṭālib in the Baḥīrā story pretends that he is the boy's father, so does 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib in his conversation with the bishop, who also knows that he is not telling the truth. He uses the same words as Baḥīrā: 'it cannot be that his father is alive'.[55] Apart from demonstrating the profundity of Abū Ṭālib's fatherly affection as well as Baḥīrā's miraculous foreknowledge, this recurring exchange of words may have been intended to counteract the sense that Muḥammad's orphanhood was an indication of a lack of divine support. One is invited to believe that since some of the People of the Book had foreknowledge of his being an orphan, it was predestined and therefore meaningful in the grand scheme of things.

Another topos that recurs in almost all of the stories about Baḥīrā and Nasṭūr is Muḥammad's refusal to swear by the Arabian Gods al-Lāt en al-'Uzzā. A surprising aspect of the arrangement of the conversation between Baḥīrā and Muḥammad is that it is the former who addresses the latter with 'By al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā!'. Baḥīrā was said to have done so, because he had noticed that this was the custom of the Arabs. This creates an occasion for Muḥammad to express his aversion to the worship of these pagan deities. In the story about his second trip to Syria and the encounter with Nasṭūr, Muḥammad again refuses to swear by these gods, this time when he is closing a trade deal. This topos embodies unequivocal proof of Muḥammad's monotheism

[53] See above: p. 44, n. 32.
[54] al-Kalā'ī, *Kitāb al-iktifā'*, vol. 1, p. 245.
[55] al-Kalā'ī, *Kitāb al-iktifā'*, vol. 1, p. 241.

throughout his childhood, in reply to accusations that he had been an idolater before his mission and therefore could not claim to be the heir to the pristine Abrahamic faith.[56]

When reading through these traditions, one notices how the events described are constructed in such a way as to culminate in the pronouncement of such symbolic, climactic, utterances. They are short pieces containing quasi-historical information with virtually no metadiscourse connecting them; the *akhbār* in the biography of the Prophet are tiny isolated narratives that, each in their own way, are to disclose the veracity of his mission. The heavily topological disclosures of divine guidance form the highlights of these narratives and are the main reason for their narration. They are emblematic of the tendency of *sīra* literature to shape events according to what early believers held to be God's purpose behind the Islamic message and, more often than not, weaken their bid to historicity.[57] This is not to say that the traditions about Muḥammad's youth cannot potentially have a historical kernel; the problem lies in the fact that such topoi float from account to account, which means that we are not just one step away from a potential historical reality, but at least two. In order to make sense of this material, we first have to reconstruct to which narrated event such a topos originally 'belonged'. Then we have to try to determine whether that narrated event is a sublimation of something historical or not.[58] That both these steps are extra difficult in the case of the infancy stories speaks for itself. Crone's position was that if one wants to debate the historicity of the encounter one is left empty-handed, as one cannot

[56] The Christian Arabic polemical text entitled the *Apology of al-Kindī*, for example, tries to prove that the Prophet was an idolater as a youngster by means of the verses Q 93:6–7, 'Did He not find thee an orphan, and shelter thee? Did He not find thee erring, and guide thee?'; Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 42.

[57] See Wansbrough's painstaking analysis, which leads to this dramatic conclusion, in his *The Sectarian Milieu*. See, however, next footnote.

[58] Noth, and more recently Conrad, have argued that the 'topological' nature of the early Muslim historical sources does not rule out that they contain some historical data, even if they are hidden or dislocated in the narratives. Their works call for a more nuanced and detailed study of these early sources than deemed feasible by Wansbrough in his *Sectarian Milieu*. See: Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, and Conrad, 'Heraclius in Early Islamic Kerygma'. However, when it comes to the question of the details and context of Muḥammad's early life, thus far close to nothing that modern historians would call reliable data has been uncovered. See also Chase Robinson's brief but pertinent comments on the problem, illustrated by means of the figure of Waraqa ibn Nawfal, in his 'Prophecy and holy men', esp. pp. 244–248.

even conclude that there *is* no basis to it.[59] After surveying the Baḥīrā material she concluded that 'what the sources offer are fifteen equally fictitious versions of an event that never took place'. She investigated the accounts in light of the question whether Muḥammad indeed participated in trade missions to Syria and she criticized Montgomery Watt for drawing 'historical' information from mythic accounts by simply stripping off their miraculous feats. Rubin presumed that the traditions ultimately go back to one and the same 'scene of attestation'.[60] This is very likely the case. Yet it is clear that one cannot isolate one narration as the source of inspiration of the other traditions, nor indeed infer the historicity of a trip to Syria or the existence of a Christian teacher to Muḥammad from any of these traditions. Hence one cannot support assertions such as that made by Aloys Sprenger, who after perusing all these stories not only concluded that Baḥīrā was a historical figure, but also that he had spent time with Muḥammad in Mecca.[61]

It may come as little surprise that Baḥīrā is no more than a symbolical figure, lacking historicity, for modern historians. More surprising perhaps is his status among some of the Muslims traditionalists, who already appear to have expressed this view. We have noted the role which the encounter played in the controversy surrounding the pre-eminence of Abū Bakr or ʿAlī. Baḥīrā himself is a mere instrument within this controversy. When one reads the many references in the sources about the question of who converted earlier, ʿAlī or Abū Bakr, the latter's presence at the time of Baḥīrā's proclamation of Muḥammad's prophethood is adduced. Yet there is never any mention of Baḥīrā himself, even though his recognition of Muḥammad's

[59] Crone, *Meccan Trade*, p. 220.

[60] Rubin, *The eye of the Beholder*, p. 52.

[61] For Sprenger's work on this topic see his: 'Ueber eine Handschrift', 'Moḥammed's Zusammenkunft mit dem Einsiedler Baḥyrâ', 'Mohammad's Journey to Syria', the short notices 'Gegenbemerkung', 'Aus Briefen an Prof. Fleischer' and *Das Leben und die Lehre*, vol. 1, pp. 178–190. Several Orientalists at the time criticized him for misreading some of the sources as well as reading them extremely selectively. Many articles and notes appeared in which his theory was criticized. See: Wüstenfeld, 'Ueber das Kitâb al-Ṭabaḳât al-kabîr', 'Nachträgliches über Baḥîrâ', his notice 'Aus einem Briefe von Prof. Dr. Wüstenfeld'; Th. Nöldeke, 'Hatte Muḥammad christliche Lehrer?'; Von Erdmann, 'Schreiben des Staatrathes Dr. Von Erdmann'.

prophethood should have been regarded as the earliest, at least in accordance with the terms set by those who adduced this event (i.e. recognition of the Prophet before the first divine revelation counts as conversion).

Elsewhere one can also observe that, in the minds of some Muslim historians, the monk is a predominantly symbolic figure. When Ibn Qutayba gives the list of 'those who were faithful before the mission of the prophet' he mentions Baḥīrā only indirectly, i.e. when he speaks about the faith of Ri'āb.[62] Ri'āb's miraculously early belief in the Prophet is emphasized by means of his association with Baḥīrā, with whom he is jointly mentioned. Baḥīrā himself, however, is not acknowledged as one of the very first believers in a separate entry. Moreover, when biographers confuse Waraqa ibn Nawfal and Baḥīrā, or Nasṭūr and Baḥīrā, it seems to be a question of equating mythic figures having a similar symbolic value rather than a matter of variations in actual historical reporting. Such an explanation is more persuasive than the suggestion that these stories refer to one and the same historical figure, as Sprenger asserted on the basis of texts which claim that the bewildered Khadīja, after hearing about Muḥammad's first revelation experience, rushed off to interrogate Baḥīrā rather than Waraqa.[63] To believe such claims is equivalent to ignoring how convenient Baḥīrā could be as a mere character and symbol in any number of ongoing narratives within Islamic intellectual circles.

However, those acquainted with both sides of the 'attestation story'—Islamic and Christian—may argue that the likelihood of its historicity is enhanced by the fact that the two different communities have their independent accounts. Since the story has come down to us through the channels of different communities, it may seem plausible that different groups have reported the events independently. But caution is needed here; for this is precisely the common-sensical inference 'there must be some truth in it' that the Christian *Legend* exploits for its legiti-

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[62] Ibn Qutayba, *Kītāb al-maʿārif*, pp. 35–37, and see above: pp. 43–44.

[63] Al-Suhaylī, *Rawḍ al-unuf*, vol. 2, p. 244; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 2, pp. 459–460; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 16, p. 172. These sources all refer back to the eighth-century biography of the Prophet by Sulaymān al-Taymī. Al-Nuwayrī probably noticed the conflict with the version (which he mentions as well) in which it is Waraqa to whom Khadīja goes to inquire and therefore added that she went all the way to Syria to speak to Baḥīrā. For Sprenger's various articles on Baḥīrā see above: p. 52, n. 61.

macy and persuasive power.[64] In Chapter 1, I have already posited that the *Legend* is 'counterhistory', but this characterization will now be supported with more detailed observations. In other words, it is fitting to address the question of how the Christian *Legend* of Baḥīrā relates to the various stories about the monk in Muslim tradition. This is an obvious question to ask, and to answer it can be rather straightforward for a number of reasons. The *Legend*, like the Islamic traditions, purports to be a direct account of an historical event. In truth, however, it was plainly constructed for the purpose of advancing particular ideological notions by reference to a simple concrete setting—a setting that is provided by Muslim tradition.

There can be little doubt that this Christian legend is a rewriting of the Islamic stories. If one takes the position that the stories on the Christian side are based upon historical reality, then it has to be asked why Christians do not in turn appear to have any direct historical recollection of the prophet that precedes the *Legend*.[65] If one assumes, on the other hand, that there is no historical basis to the story, there are still objections to be overcome in arguing that Christians devised it and Muslims followed them. The *Legend*'s primary message is that the Qurʾan has not been revealed to Muḥammad, a position so evidently objectionable to a Muslim audience that it is difficult to imagine that the Islamic traditions about the monk have any foundation whatsoever in the Christian tradition. Furthermore, if the Muslim story were a retelling of a Christian narration about an encounter of the two men, then one would expect the Muslim versions of the story to contain distinct elements which serve to undermine the claim of Christian influence on the Prophet. Yet this is not so.

A close reading of the *Legend* adds further weight to the view that the *Legend* is textually secondary to the Islamic tradition. Its dependence on the Muslim biographies becomes clear when one reads the different recensions of the *Legend* while keeping the Islamic story in mind. The passage about the first encounter of Muḥammad and the monk in the 'synoptic' recensions {12–13} is not only based on the Muslim belief in some sort of encounter of the two men but also on its

[64] See the discussion in the Introduction about the intensity of the debates in early Muslim society on the question of the historicity of reports.

[65] Cf. Griffith, 'Muḥammad and the monk', p. 148.

actual narration. The sequence of events in the passage concerned follows the pattern set out in Muslim tradition exactly, and yet critiques it through its intertextual tension with it. The *Legend* and Muslim traditions agree on Baḥīrā recognizing Muḥammad from far away amongst the crowd when approaching. The 'synoptic' recensions then go on to mention the vision above Muḥammad's head. The affirmation of the vision is of great significance. It has exactly the same purpose as in the Islamic stories, in that it proves that this boy is indeed the one singled out by God for a great future. But in the *Legend* it is accompanied with a taunt to the Prophet's companions as presented in the *Sīra*: 'They, however, were not aware of the vision' ({12.7}). This is undoubtedly a critique of the Islamic tradition, in which Baḥīrā was indeed also the only one to witness the miraculous vision. The message is unmistakable: the Arabs simply did not have the capacity to view signs of the divine, and their own pious traditions bear witness to that.[66]

This obvious critique was followed by more subtle ones. The choice of words and phrases used in the *Legend* to describe the vision can be seen as an implicit dismissal of the positive thrust of the Islamic story. The Syriac recensions say that it was 'a certain vision', 'something like a cloud' above his head ({12.2}).[67] The wording in the *Legend* is purposely vague, as though to highlight the fact that the descriptions of the vision in the *Sīra* are vague as well.

To drive home this image of the Arabs as spiritually deficient, the *Legend* then goes on to 'correct' the Islamic narration. Muḥammad did not have to stay outside during the meal to which Baḥīrā had invited all the people 'because he was too young' (*li-ḥadāthat sinnihi*), but instead because he was of no importance in the eyes of the Arabs, who called him a 'simpleminded foolish boy' ({12.5}). In other words, they needed Baḥīrā to become aware of the fact that he was chosen by God. Baḥīrā proceeds to publicly predict a great future for Muḥammad, with his power spreading to all corners of the earth. Significantly in this account, however, Baḥīrā fails to mention Muḥammad's role as

[66] In origin, this aspect of the Muslim story is nothing extraordinary: the monk is a saint-like figure who is close to the Divine and therefore possesses a special spiritual-semiotic awareness that ordinary people are not expected to have. See also my comments at the end of this chapter.

[67] A1 also refers to something special to be seen, but simply says 'He showed them the sign that was on him and taught them what he saw on his head'.

prophet.[68] If we compare this with the words of Baḥīrā according to Ibn Isḥāq we notice that in that tradition, too, prophethood is not predicted explicitly to Muḥammad: all that Baḥīrā foretells is that the boy will have great stature (*sha'n ʿaẓīm*).[69] The *Legend* reproduces this, and, on the one hand, underlines the imprecision of the proclamation, and on the other—paradoxically—follows the Islamic story, including its reference to the miraculous aspects of the encounter, as closely as possible in order to draw authority from the alleged divine working behind the event.

At the end of the famous 'scene of attestation' the debate between Baḥīrā and Muḥammad about religion begins. At this point the *Legend* leaves the *sīra* model behind. Yet echoes of *sīra* literature are clearly recognizable in the representation of the encounter, leaving no doubt as to the role of polemical reinterpretation in this phase of the *Legend*. When comparing the relevant passage in the *Legend* with the various Islamic versions of the story it appears that the *Legend* follows the well-known story of Ibn Isḥāq more closely than the other versions described at the beginning of this chapter. The basic elements of the caravan approaching, the shade miracle and the recognition *en plein public* are found in several of the longer accounts. However, the exchange of words about why Muḥammad is left sitting outside occurs only in the group of stories that follow Ibn Isḥāq's narration. Still, some other elements of that subgroup are not recognizable in the *Legend*, and for that reason it remains difficult to determine whether this is the direct inspiration of the *Legend*'s 'renarration'. It may well have been a more primitive, perhaps orally transmitted, version of the story.

### *The Name Baḥīrā and the Question of Origins*

Contrary to what has been argued above, François Nau thought that the Muslim stories about Baḥīrā derived from Christian sources. The

[68] ES is an exception. In {14.12}, among a number of things, the monk also predicts that Muḥammad will be a prophet to his own people.

[69] This is most likely the reason why the West-Syrian bishop Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), notwithstanding his general rejection of the 'Proofs of Prophethood' of Muḥammad, has no objection to reproducing the story in his Arabic historiographical work, which he wrote at the request of Muslim friends. In his Syriac chronicle there is no such an account; instead he refers to Jewish informants of Muḥammad. For the condensed *sīra* story: Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Ta'rīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, p. 160; cf. Samir, 'The Prophet Muḥammad', pp. 87–91. For some of Bar Hebraeus' writings against the Islamic 'Proofs of Prophethood' see: Nau, 'Deux textes de Bar Hébraeus'.

simple reason, according to him, is that the Syriac word *bḥīrā* is not a proper name but rather an adjective for someone 'tried' and 'approved', its form being the passive participle of b-ḥ-r, 'to try, prove as silver by fire' and its figurative sense being 'renowned', 'eminent'.[70] This can be used as a way to describe a distinguished monk or teacher, but, more specifically, according to some modern scholars, as a title of honor for a monk.[71] Arabic sources, in which this epithet mistakenly appears as a proper name, are therefore clearly secondary to the Syriac sources. Or as Nau asserted:

> Les musulmans ne connaissent plus que cette épithète: ils ne la comprennent pas et la tiennent pour un nom propre; ils montrent par là que leur tradition est secondaire, et qu'il nous faut donc, contrairement à ce qu'on coutume de faire, demander aux Grecs et aux Syriens, et non aux musulmans, ce qu'était Sergius.[72]

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[70] Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, p. 41. Bar Bahlūl accordingly translates it into Arabic as *mumtaḥan*, 'tried', but also as *murtāḍ*, *muṣaffā*, and *mukhtār*, which are closer to the Aramaic meaning of 'elect' (Duval, *Lexicon Syriacum*, vol. 1, p. 379, cf. Lidzbarski, 'Salām und Islām', p. 96).

[71] See for example: MS Vat. Syr. 18, fol. 184a, mentioning 'a venerable and esteemed monk', *dayrāyā kḥīdā w-bḥīrā*: Assemani, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus*, vol. 2, p. 69 and the three instances in the *Vita* of John the Little of Scetis in: Nau, 'La version syriaque', p. 351, p. 357, p. 366. In the early eighth-century *Vita* of Theodotus of Amid one finds a clear case of its specific use for those who have been put to the test: 'The evil demons had left them—they would never see them again; and they became proven (*bḥīrē*) monks': Palmer, 'Āmīd in the Seventh-Century Syriac Life', p. 116 (translated passage from the unedited work). Cf. Griffith, 'Muḥammad and the monk Baḥīrā', p. 148, Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, pp. 258–259. Arabic-speaking Christians and Muslims, also nowadays, often call the monk Buḥayrā, making his name a diminutive. This form must already have been in use in the twelfth century, as we see the name appear as Boheira in Latin (Burman, *Religious Polemic*, p. 270). This vocalization can also explain the form Sergius of Bukhārā, who appears as the writer of the Qurʾan in an Armenian text; Basmadjian, 'Histoire du Père Élie de Kharpout', p. 340 (tr). There are many other variations to the name; a common (erroneous) spelling of it is with an ending in *tāʾ marbūṭa* instead of *alif maqṣūra*.

[72] Nau, 'L'expansion nestorienne en Asie', p. 215. He believed to have found a reference to 'Sergius' in the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, who mentions a Phantasiast bishop with this name who dwelled in al-Ḥīra and in Yemen at the end of the sixth century. Nau, 'A propos d'un feuillet d'un manuscrit arabe', pp. 237–245. See also: Grégoire, 'Mahomet et le Monophysisme', pp. 117–119. Other occasional references to men called Sergius in Christian historical works have been adduced in connection with the story of Sergius Baḥīrā. None, however, mentions a connection with Islam or its Prophet. Thomas of Marga mentions a Sergius who wrote a book about the achievements of local pious men, rather than of the greatest heroes of the church, who was called 'Destroyer of the Mighty' for that reason. He mentions an Ishoʿyahb as his disciple and Bēt Garmai as his dwelling place. (Budge, *The book of governors*, vol. 1, pp. 60–61 (t), vol. 2, pp. 109–110 (tr)). It is not impossible that the remark of the narrator

Mingana was of the same mind as Nau on this point.[73] Logical as it may seem at first sight, however, the argument cannot withstand scrutiny.

If the Syriac *Legend* had been produced first, it would indeed have contained the appellation 'Baḥīrā' only as an epithet, which Muslims could then erroneously have taken as a proper name. If the Islamic stories had come first, the Syriac speakers who later created their own version of the encounter would necessarily have had to give the monk an additional proper name, because to them 'Baḥīrā' as a proper name could not have made sense. When looking at the first possibility, we realize that the monk would also have had a real name in Syriac—which, Nau would say, was 'Sergius'. The question then is why that name disappeared in the 'secondary' Muslim versions of the story. The second possibility, quite apart from my arguments based on a close parallel reading of the texts, is not in any way less likely than the first. Or rather, there is a concrete reason for the appearance of the name Sergius, whereas for the disappearance of the name there is not. When Christians adopted the Muslim stories they were confronted with a name that to them was not a name at all. If they had retained the name as it was, the story would have immediately revealed itself as not originating in the Syriac-speaking community and therefore have undermined its claim to being a true eye-witness account. Hence, the monk was baptized 'Sergius', a name of a popular saint, also much revered by the Arabs.[74]

The choice of the name 'Baḥīrā' by the early Muslim storytellers, on the other hand, was indeed based on a misunderstanding of the Syriac term, with which they became acquainted when they heard monks, and perhaps clergymen, being described or addressed.[75] Already during

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at the end of ES that he discovered after Baḥīrā's death that he was from Bēt Garmai is an attempt to associate the hero of the Legend with this particular Sergius, even though otherwise the two stories otherwise do not match; the Mar Yahb/Ishoʿyahb of the Legend supposedly only met Baḥīrā briefly and is not his 'disciple'.

[73] Mingana, 'Transmission of the Koran', p. 407. He gives Pseudo-al-Kindī's account of the codification of the Qur'an priority over *ḥadīth*. In that context he claims that Baḥīrā is a later, mistaken, name for the Sergius mentioned by Pseudo-al-Kindī. Interestingly, Mingana also promises future studies on the monk, but these have never appeared.

[74] As several scholars have remarked, considering the importance of the cult of Saint Sergius in Syria, the choice of this name was a predictable one. See among others: Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, p. 103.

[75] WS and ES, in {2.2}, actually make the point that it is the Sons of Hagar who

pre-Islamic times until long after the composition of the *Sīra*, Arabs had close contact with the monastic world of Syria and Iraq and the traces of Arabian monasticism can be found in the oldest Arabic poetry.[76] This contact is reflected in the Qur'an as well, when it mentions monks' cells and speaks in mixed terms about the monkish character.[77] From such references we can infer that the original audience of the Qur'an must have been familiar with monasticism. Recent scholarship on literary and archeological sources has drawn attention to the intensity of the contact between the Umayyads and the monks of Syria. Monasteries were attractive places where a traveller could find water, spend the night, and find spiritual inspiration from the tranquil and modest lifestyle of those renouncing the world.[78] In the eyes of some the appeal of monasteries went further, as we see Muslims using monasteries as hiding places during warfare, or simply as places to enjoy beautiful gardens, wine and meals. It is therefore not surprising that several Umayyad notables built residences in close vicinity to monastic complexes.[79]

Through this type of contact, together with the assimilation of Eastern Christian culture to early Islam through religious conversion, the perception of monks being on intimate terms with the Divine became current amongst Muslims too. The monk as miracle-worker, the monk as advisor to the ruler, the monk as healer, the monk as diviner—all these images, so familiar in Christian hagiography, survived in the minds of Muslim writers. When the monks appeared in the *akhbār* of early Islam as heroes heralding the advent of Islam, they were represented as having distanced themselves from the allegedly corrupted religious faith and practices of mainstream Christians. However, leaving aside their apologetic purposes, these stories are essentially a witness to the absorption of the Eastern Christian hagiographical tradition

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call the monk 'Baḥīrā'. This is likely to be an allusion to the existing Islamic tradition, rather than only as a reference to the fictional Sons of Hagar in the Legend itself.

[76] A useful succinct study is Müller, *Kirche und Mission*, and see below: n. 79, n. 80.

[77] Q 22:40, Q 5:82, Q 57:27, Q 9:34.

[78] Although Syriac and Christian Arab writers presented the fact the Muslim conquerors often spared monasteries from being raided as a show of respect for their faith, it seems likely that the actual benefits of monasteries to Muslim travelers formed a rather significant factor behind this treatment as well; for the apologetic comments on the protection of monasteries, see below: Ch. 4, pp. 113–121.

[79] Key Fowden, 'Christian Residences and Umayyad Monasteries'.

and the world which it represents.[80] The shared cultural landscape that underlies the apologetic end-products which form the central theme of this book can explain how the Islamic story of Baḥīrā would have made sense to its audience and how its narrators did not need a Syriac legend to find inspiration for a miraculous event, involving the founder of their religion and an esteemed old monk (*bḥīrā*) who was a witness to the truth of his mission.

[80] Sizgorich, Thomas, 'Narrative and Community in Late Antiquity'; Key Fowden, 'The Lamp and the Wine Flask'.

CHAPTER THREE

# THE APOCALYPSE OF BAḤĪRĀ

Having discussed the Islamic stories about Baḥīrā and their functions, the focus of this chapter will be on the *Legend*, notably the apocalyptic parts which are to be found in each of the recensions. It has often been observed that apocalyptic texts represent the first literary responses of Christians to Islam.[1] They are exponents of an age-old tradition of Near Eastern culture, to which the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic Bible books also belong. The genre is full of paradoxes. Whereas an apocalypse claims to reflect a unique personal sensual experience that forces itself upon the passive recipient, it is in reality always a literary construct in which 'the smell of midnight oil pervades'.[2] Its originality is crammed within the rigid constraints of convention, but these constraints also form one of the securing factors in the apocalypse's claim to genuineness.[3]

The force of an apocalypse lies first of all in its ability to give meaning to political and social instability, by revealing how chaotic and adverse events are in reality part of a divine cosmic plan in which all significant changes are purposeful. Proclaiming the imminent end of the world is hardly the principal aim of these writings. Before anything else, apocalyptic texts are to be understood as works of religious and political propaganda that capitalize on a communal worldview and apocalyptic feelings in order to express a view about developments in the present day and the near future, by 'revealing' how they are connected to a divine final judgment.[4]

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[1] For a survey of the Christian apocalypses in response to the rise of Islam, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 257–307 and Martinez, 'La literatura apocalíptica'.

[2] A characterization made by Cohn, in: *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to come*, p. 165.

[3] Amongst the many works that have appeared on this subject, two good introductions that define the genre, and its subgenres, and analyze its structural elements are: Collins, 'Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature' and Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*.

[4] A classic contribution to the field, which recognizes the polemical aspects of apocalypses and shows the need for Jewish, Christian and Muslim apocalypses to be studied as a joint phenomenon, is Steinschneider, 'Apocalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz'.

Several Eastern Christian apocalyptists in the seventh century have attempted to make sense of the disorientation caused by the presence of a new and unforeseen foreign power. As part of their attempts to explain why much of what used to be the Byzantine and Persian empires had now fallen into the hands of the Arabs, who claimed to have God on their side, they sought recourse to the Bible. On the basis of a typological focus on ancient temporary invasions by foreign peoples in the Holy Land, the new Arab rule was interpreted as having a transient nature. The purpose of this temporary rule was to chastise those who had sinned. To interpret the Arab dominion in this way served both to provide consolation and hope for change, and to reassert the truth of Christianity. If a lack of steadfastness in the faith had caused this colossal punishment, only a return to faith would remove the punishment. The adherence to the notion of transience thus became a way to evade the religious claims of Islam.

In the early eighth century, when Arab rule had already shown itself to be anything but ephemeral, this approach was supplemented with other responses to Islam, notably disputation literature. The focus shifted towards the reasoned defense of the Christian faith and the refutation of the religious doctrines of Islam.[5] We see nevertheless that apocalyptic writings by Christians living in the Islamic world kept on appearing, especially at times of great political change or uncertainty.[6] One such period was the beginning of the ninth century, when a series of internal upheavals upset the stability of the ʿAbbasid caliphate. The first century of the ʿAbbasids is an era generally associated with the flourishing of culture and science at the courts of the Caliphs. However, it also witnessed many periods of unrest and instability the roots of which lay, among other things, in tribal conflicts and ʿAlid insurrections.[7] The greatest crisis of the time was the fourth civil war, which broke out after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in the year 809. His son Muḥammad al-Amīn became Caliph, while another of his sons, ʿAbdallāh, the later Caliph al-Maʾmūn, was appointed as governor of Khurasan. Al-Amīn, when taking office, immediately took the decision to appoint his own sons as heirs to the Caliphate. This was

[5] Reinink, 'The beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature'.

[6] Abel, 'Changements politiques et littérature eschatologique'. See also Cook, 'Two Christian Arabic Prophecies', for two examples as late as the eighteenth century.

[7] The various rebellions in Syria under the early ʿAbbasids have been analyzed by Cobb in his *White Banners*. For the ʿAlid rebellions see the chapter on this subject in Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate*, pp. 199–213, and see below.

a violation of the testament of his father, who had stipulated that al-Maʾmūn be the successor of al-Amīn. The chaos which broke out in the Caliphate as a result of al-Amīn's decision started in 811. Al-Amīn was besieged in Baghdad by his brother's troops coming from Khurasan in an eighteen-month siege, in which the city was largely destroyed.[8] In 813 al-Amīn was captured and killed. This was not the end of the tumultuous period. In 817 al-Maʾmūn designated an ʿAlid as his heir, and this stirred up a rebellion against him in Baghdad, where as a countermove Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī was appointed Caliph. Only in 819, when al-Maʾmūn came from Khurasan to Baghdad, did he begin to gain true control over the Caliphate.

As in the past, this civil war kindled apocalyptic expectations in the people of the time. Such sentiments are reflected in a Christian Arabic Sybilline prophecy, in which a Christian apocalyptist, in the guise of a Sybil, associated the events of this war with the age leading up to the 'birth pangs' of the end of times:

> A king shall reign there for twenty-three years, but shall not complete the twenty-fourth. […] He shall leave as his successors two sons, the name of one being the same as the name of the one who shall come forth from the south. Syria shall weep over the one who is called Amīn. Then the coast shall be ruined, and the churches also, and all the people shall walk in falsehood and injustice.[9]

The prophecy continues with the appearance of the 'Lion Cub', a widely-used apocalyptic symbol for the 'King of Rome', the Last Byzantine Emperor, who puts an end to the unrest in the world and rules for forty years before the arrival of Gog and Magog and the end of times.

The turmoil of the fourth civil war provoked apocalyptic prophecies among Muslims as well. Their predictions about the course of the Caliphate, future wars and the end of world were shaped as sayings of the Prophet, his companions, and other great men of the past. Although most of these traditions never became canonical ḥadīth, they survived in a large collection which was made in the first half of the ninth century by the Sunni traditionist Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād (d. c. 844), called *Kitāb al-fitan*.[10] His work is the principal source for apoc-

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[8] For a summary of the events see: Samadi, 'The Struggle between the two brothers'.

[9] Ebied and Young, 'An unrecorded Arabic Version', p. 296 (t), p. 297 (tr).

[10] The first scholar to draw attention to Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād's work was Krenkow,

alyptic thought in the first centuries of Islam. It has been used with increasing frequency by modern scholars with the aim of complementing or readjusting our understanding of historical developments in early Islam, when the sources of conventional genres appear to provide us with distorted and anachronistic pictures.[11]

In the chapter of the *Kītāb al-fitan* dealing with 'the first sign that will occur with the break-up of the Banū l-'Abbās', one finds traditions which link the end of 'Abbasid rule to a time when Caliphs fight amongst each other. 'The first sign of the break-up of their rule is disagreement between them'.[12] Then 'the black banners that come from Khurasan will continue their years of triumph until they disagree amongst each other, and when they disagree amongst each other three banners will be raised in Syria'.[13] Several ḥadīths in this chapter point to the time of al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn. They mention, for example, that the Mahdī will come when the seventh of the Sons of 'Abbās dies,[14] and that the 'Abbasids will rule for 'seventy-two years'.[15]

The apocalypse of Baḥīrā also has to be counted among the apocalypses which focus on this period, as it clearly alludes to the end of the 'Abbasid rule at the time of the seventh Caliph. However, rather than predicting the end of Islamic rule as a whole, as the above-mentioned Sybilline prophecy does, Baḥīrā's vision continues with a number of Islamic messianic figures who will govern the world before the final salvation of the believers in Christ. To find such figures in a Christian apocalypse is curious, and it underscores the intricacy of the interaction between Jewish, Christian and Muslim apocalyptic thought and imagery in the early period of Islam. Muslims adopted much of the apocalyptic language of Jews and Christians, such as horned and colored beasts, 'weeks of years', powerful winds etc. They also adopted

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'The Book of Strife'. In 1979 a dissertation on the topic was written by Aguadé, entitled *Messianismus zur Zeit der Frühen Abbasiden*, in which he included an introduction to Nu'aym and his work on pp. 8–44. David Cook lists similar works (both extant and lost) in his *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 24–29.

[11] For example: Bashear, 'Apocalyptic and Other Materials'; Michael Cook, 'Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions'; Aguadé, 'Algunos hadices', Manzano Moreno, 'Byzantium and al-Andalus', and, most importantly, the work of Madelung, to which I will refer frequently below.

[12] Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 140 (nr. 571); similarly: p. 182, (nr. 739).

[13] Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 141 (nr. 577).

[14] Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 142 (nr. 585).

[15] Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 142 (nr. 582).

the eschatological scenarios of the advent of Gog and Magog, the Antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the blowing of the trumpets etc.[16] The principal channel of transmission is thought to have been the early converts to Islam. The *Legend*, for its part, adopts the Muslim prophecies that were formulated in a symbolic language that was very familiar to their own.

It seems useful at this point to review the apocalyptic appearances in Baḥīrā's vision with the aim of identifying the historical and eschatological figures to which it alludes, notably those found in the ḥadīths in the *Kitāb al-fitan* of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād. After this is done, I will discuss the material in the context of the fourth civil war.

Every recension, except the Latin reworking,[17] contains two apocalypses, one before the encounter of Baḥīrā with Muḥammad, and one after (henceforth referred to as Apoc 1 and Apoc 2 respectively). These two pieces have different traditional apocalyptic forms. Apoc 1 constitutes a genuine apocalyptic vision, which was revealed to Baḥīrā at Mount Sinai. It follows the traditional format of the genre, whereby an angel interprets the theriomorphic appearances for the recipient of the vision. It ends with an otherworldly journey of the spirit. Apoc 2 may more appropriately be called an 'oracle', as there is no reference to either the act or the medium of revelation. Whereas Apoc 1 reveals man's destiny in spatial terms, such as when Baḥīrā gets a view of both the righteous in heaven and the sufferers in the 'bottomless pit', Apoc 2 reveals man's destiny in temporal terms, as it foretells all events leading up to the Day of the Judgment. When comparing the content of the two pieces, we see that despite this difference, the predictions about the rulers of the world up to the time of the Last Emperor are largely the same. Apoc 2 is nonetheless much more elaborate in its descriptions of the woes during the various epochs, especially during the time of the 'Sons of Hāshim', and it predicts the advent of the unclean nations before the advent of the Antichrist, which Apoc 1 does not.

In order to understand the apocalyptic parts of the *Legend* better it will be useful first to present an overview of the seven figures which symbolize the various Caliphates and rulers. They are listed below, together with their number and symbol, a summary of the character

[16] An outline of the principal apocalyptic themes in Islam can be found in Arjomand, 'Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classical Period'.

[17] The Latin recension has merged the two apocalyptic parts. See below: Ch. 8, pp. 215–217.

and events of their rule in each of the apocalyptic sections, and the divergences amongst the different recensions.

*Apocalyptic predictions up to the time of the Last Byzantine Emperor*

| Rule | Number | Symbol | Coming from | Events/ character (Apoc 1) | Events/ character (Apoc 2) | Divergence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sons of Ishmael | 12 | White beast | South | – | – | |
| Sons of Hāshim | 7 | Black beast | North | – | Tyranny, decadence, persecution of Christians | ES: 7 or 8 A1: 7 plus little horns A2: 3 |
| Mahdī b. Fāṭima | 5 | Bull | South | Peace | Peace and observance of the Law | |
| Sons of Sufyān | – | Panther in red | West | Slaughters/ persecutes Sons of Ishmael | Id | WS: lamb dressed as wolf |
| Sons of Joktan | – | Young goat | North | – | Comes to promised land | A1, A2: West |
| Mahdī b. ʿĀʾisha | – | Lion | – | Distress and persecution | Persecutes Christians as chastisement | WS: South A2: desert |
| Green King | – | Man in green | East | Last of Ishmaelite kingdoms | Comes at the end of Ishmaelite Kingdoms, peace for Christians | A1a: yellow |

What follows is an in-depth discussion of each of the seven figures.

*Sons of Ishmael*

Apoc 1 begins with a white beast with twelve horns coming from the South that is said to represent 'the Sons of Ishmael'. At the beginning of Apoc 2 the year 1055 of the 'years of Alexander', which agrees with the year 744, is predicted as the point in time when the prophecy of God to Abraham about the twelve great Ishmaelite leaders will be fulfilled.[18]

[18] Griffith has drawn attention to the fact that this date is given according to the 'years of Alexander', which he calls 'a convention of the Syriac writers of the Syrian Orthodox community'. If this were an exclusively West-Syrian convention, then it would probably mean that the first Syriac recension was composed by a member of

The reference is to Gen 17:20, 'twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation'. The prediction that follows immediately is that in the same year 'the Arabs will kill their king and after that there will be great upheaval in the world during one great week'. There is no doubt that this is an *ex eventu* prophecy. Indeed, in the year 744 the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd II was killed and the ensuing 'great week' of unrest refers to the turbulent period of the third civil war leading up to the ʿAbbasid revolution.

Both in Christian apocalyptic texts and in ḥadīth the importance of the Biblical prophecy of Genesis 17:20 is apparent. Eschatological expectations amongst Muslims were heightened at the turn of the first century Hijra, when the twelfth Caliph ruled (ʿUmar II, who was by some regarded as the Mahdī).[19] However, also during the time following, when the number of Caliphs had already exceeded the amount of twelve, the interpretation of political reality was recalibrated in such a way as to fit the Biblical prophecy. The belief in the veracity of this prophecy was apparently so strong that it allowed for such manipulations, as it can be shown that the prophecy was used as an instrument to denounce and 'subtract' disliked rulers. We can retrace this in some of the apocalyptic ḥadīths collected by Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād in which a distinction is made between 'Caliphs' and 'kings'. 'King' here is a derogatory term, which is used for those who were considered unworthy rulers.[20] In several ḥadīths in Nuʿaym's compilation there is a selective reference to the Caliphs before the ʿAbbasid revolution. One is the discourse of Kaʿb with a Christian, well-versed in the scriptures, named Yashūʿ, in which Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān followed by nine Umayyads, including the last Umayyad Caliph Marwān II, make up the twelve leaders of the Umma.[21] And in the prophecy of a certain Nāth, 'who was a prophet', twelve 'banners' are said to rule, the

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the West-Syrian community. Unfortunately, this is not the case; East-Syrian authors also have a clear predilection for this type of dating. One can note for example that among the 122 East-Syrian manuscripts from Seert described by Scher there is not one dated item that does not give the date according to the Greeks. See: Scher, *Catalogue des manuscrits … de Séert*.

[19] Madelung, 'al-Mahdī', p. 1231.

[20] This phenomenon has been carefully analyzed and illustrated by Rubin in his 'Apocalypse and Authority', esp. pp. 14–27. The variations to the 'twelve theme' in apocalyptic ḥadīth are discussed also in the excursus 'The twelve Princes' in his *Between Bible and Qur'an* (pp. 251–280).

[21] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, pp. 471–473 (nr. 1478); shorter versions: pp. 73–74 (nr. 272), p. 128 (nr. 531).

descriptions of which allude to the Prophet, again the Rāshidūn without ʿAlī and eight Umayyads, up to al-Walīd II (r. 743). It continues with the early ʿAbbasid period and ends in an obscure endtime scenario.[22] In yet another ḥadīth, attributed to Ḥudhayfa ibn al-Yamān, the counting of the twelve leaders only starts with the Umayyads: '(Ḥudhayfa) said: "After ʿUthmān (may God be pleased with him) there will be twelve kings of the Sons of Umayya". Someone asked him: "Caliphs?" He said: "no, kings!".'[23]

In all likelihood the latter type of calculation also underlies the prediction in the *Legend*. Before the ʿAbbasid revolution eighteen Caliphs ruled the Muslim community in reality, first the four Rāshidūn and then fourteen Umayyads. If Baḥīrā's vision excludes the last two Umayyad Caliphs, Ibrāhīm (r. 744) and Marwān II (r. 744–750), as the reference at the beginning of Apoc 2 to the 'great week of unrest' seems to indicate, there would be twelve Umayyads up to this point in time. Baḥīrā's vision probably has them in mind (instead of a selection of Caliphs) when referring to the year 744 as the completion of the twelve Ishmaelite leaders. After all, the white beast is said to 'settle in the West', which would refer to the establishment of the Caliphal seat in Damascus. In other words: the Rāshidūn, having their power base still in Arabia, do not have a share in the prophecy, nor does the Prophet himself. The color white of the apocalyptic beast is probably meant as a specifically Umayyad color. Although there is no indication that white was an exclusively Umayyad color during the Umayyad period itself, the first pro-Umayyad uprisings after the ʿAbbasid revolution made white clothes their symbol, so white would therefore have been the most obvious choice of color for the apocalyptist who wants to allude to the Umayyads.[24]

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[22] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, pp. 477–480 (nr. 1496). This is the longest ḥadīth in Nuʿaym's collection. It goes back to the 780s and has a clearly recognizable Syriac substratum. See the discussion by Michael Cook in his 'An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle'. A translation can be found with David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 344–350.

[23] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 66 (nr. 249).

[24] These movements were therefore called *tabyīḍ*, 'whitening'; Omar, *ʿAbbāsiyyāt*, p. 148. For example, immediately after the ʿAbbasid revolution the governor of Qinnasḥrīn under Marwān II, called Abū l-Ward, rebelled and symbolically put on white, instead of the ʿAbbasid black (whereas the figurehead of the rebellion Abū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī dressed red. See below: pp. 73–74; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, pp. 51–58. However, there were also ʿAlids who rebelled under the ʿAbbasids who did this, notably Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh and Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh in 762; al-

It was not the Biblical prophecy *per se* which had to be presented in the *Legend* but the correctness of its interpretation as a reference to the Umayyads. The fact that the prophecy could be shown to have been fulfilled lays the foundation of the *Legend*'s authority to reveal how the Islamic rule would continue. As the Bible ran out of clear signs, the *Legend* asserts that even if Islamic rule continues for some time, it is nevertheless gradually winding down. Although it is not made explicit, the persuasive force of the configuration is heightened also by the fact that the number of the signs of the Zodiac is now complemented with the number of the Planets.[25]

### *Sons of Hāshim*

The next episode in the vision is a black beast that comes from the North, settles in the Land of Babel and represents the 'Kingdom of the Sons of Hāshim'. This cannot be anything else than the 'Abbasids. As for their name 'Sons of Hāshim', this was a common designation of the early ʿAbbasids, who used this name to refer to themselves, in order to emphasize their descent of al-Hāshim ibn ʿAbd Manāf, who was the common ancestor of the Prophet, the ʿAbbasids, and the ʿAlids.[26]

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Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, p. 223, and al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī in the year 785, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, pp. 551–560. In all cases the choice of color was in response to the ʿAbbasid black. The followers of the sectarian movement of al-Muqannaʿ in Transoxania during the reign of al-Mahdī were also wearing white and were called Mubayyiḍa for that reason; Walker and Madelung, *An Ismaili Heresiography*, pp. 76–79 (t), pp. 74–77 (tr). Then again, one passage with al-Masʿūdī in which the Caliph al-Muqtadir, referring to the capture of Rayy, blames the governor of Khurasan for letting the Mubayyiḍa enter clearly refers to the ʿAlid Buyids; al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 9, p. 6. As we shall see below, none of the symbolical colors belonged to one group exclusively, which is not surprising since there were many more sects and political movements than colors. Moreover, it is not always clear in the sources whether a color was used specifically for garments, banners or headgear. The best inventory of symbolical colors in early Islamic society can be found in Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-ʿAlī, 'Alwān al-malābisa l-ʿarabiyya'.

[25] This, in my view, can also serve as an explanation for the frequent occurrence of nineteen Caliphs in Coptic apocalyptic predictions. See for this theme: Van Lent, 'The nineteen Muslim Kings'. For the general importance of this number in Near Eastern cultures and its astronomical connection, see Rosenthal, 'Nineteen'.

[26] Some scholars have tried to show that the name 'Hāshimiyya' originally referred to those who claimed that the Imamate had been passed on to the ʿAbbasid house through the Imām Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās, on the basis of the testament of Abū Hāshim, son of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, but this remains uncertain. See: Crone, 'On the meaning of the ʿAbbasid Call to al-Riḍā', pp. 102–103.

Black was their color par excellence. The ʿAbbasid revolution started with the hoisting of black banners by Abū Muslim in Khurasan in 747. Some years later, the Caliph al-Manṣūr ordered his subjects to wear black clothing and *al-Musawwida*, 'the Black Movement', became a synonym of 'the ʿAbbasids'.[27] The choice has been interpreted as a sign of mourning for the members of the Prophet's family whom the Umayyads killed. Ibn Khaldūn writes about the ʿAbbasids: 'Their flags were black as a sign of mourning for their family, the Hāshimites, and as a sign of reproach directed against the Umayyads who killed them'.[28] Others regarded the color as a call to avenge their deaths.[29] To this we should add that the color already had eschatological connotations at the time of the revolution and may have been chosen for that reason. Three rebellions against the Umayyads had been accompanied by black banners in Umayyad times.[30] They formed the background of ḥadīths in which the hoisting of black banners is said to be a sign of the advent of the Mahdī. This, in its turn, may have formed an inspiration for the ʿAbbasid revolution.[31]

For those dissatisfied with ʿAbbasid rule the color black became a symbol of their tyranny. The negative associations with this color are used to the full in numerous apocalypses and other texts from different religious communities in ʿAbbasid times. Whereas in Apoc 1 it is mentioned briefly that the black beast will conquer the world and settle in the East, Apoc 2 relates at great length the suffering in the world during the reign of the Sons of Hāshim. They are described as the Assyrian rod of chastisement about which Isaiah spoke,[32] tyrannous and vainglorious, with long hair like women.[33] The depiction of the

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[27] Bosworth, 'Musawwida'.

[28] Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah*, vol. 2, pp. 50–51.

[29] ʿAthamina, 'The Black Banners', p. 311.

[30] ʿAthamina, 'The Black Banners', p. 309.

[31] But as the ʿAbbasids turned out to be anything but the vanguard of the Mahdī, the black banner traditions lived on as prophecies, in adapted forms (for example mentioning big vs. small banners); Attema, *De Mohammedaansche Opvattingen*, p. 170.

[32] cf. Isaiah 10:5. This particular verse is also cited in the Syriac chronicle of Zuqnīn, in which the 'rod of anger' is seen as a reference to the clubs with spikes with which Abū Muslim's revolutionary forces attacked their enemies, the so-called 'kāfirkūbāt' (Chabot, *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Maḥré*, p. 192 (t); Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn*, p. 178 (tr). See also Harrak, '*Ah! the Assyrian!*'). Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād includes a ḥadīth which says that al-Saffāḥ 'will live forty years and is called 'bird of the sky' in the Torah' (*Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 73 (nr. 269) and p. 75 (nr. 278)). This refers most likely to Isaiah 46:11 'Calling a ravenous bird from the East, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country'.

[33] {17.8}–{17.55}.

ʿAbbasids in these terms became stock imagery. It is to be found in numerous ḥadīths, as well as in Zoroastrian apocalypses.[34]

*Mahdī ibn Fāṭima*

When the seventh of these Sons of Hāshim rules, God will incite them against each other and they will bring about their own end, when all will say 'I am the king'. As I have started off saying, this is a crucial point in the vision, since it appears to be the point at which *ex eventu* prophecies make space for real predictions. The rule of the ʿAbbasids will be passed on to the Mahdī, son of Fāṭima, even though in reality, of course, the ʿAbbasid rule remained for many centuries more. This Mahdī is symbolized in Apoc 1 as a humble bull, whom 'all people of the Sons of Ismael will long for'. He, in his turn, will be followed by a number of eschatological figures. This Mahdī will first uproot the city of Babel and then create peace in the world, which will stand in sharp contrast to the turmoil of the ʿAbbasid civil war. We hear an echo of the utopian concept of the Mahdī as the one 'who fills the world with justice as it was filled with tyranny'. It is generally assumed that in the early Islamic era *mahdī* ('the one who guides' or 'the one who is guided') was used as a honorific title, still devoid of messianic connotations. It became a specifically messianic term at the time of the second civil war, during the rebellion of al-Mukhtār who proclaimed Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya as the Mahdī.[35] Numerous early ḥadīths predicted the advent of a Mahdī who would belong to the Ahl al-Bayt. The first generations of ʿAbbasid rulers had tried to lay claims to such a 'divinely guided leadership' by giving themselves epithets like al-Hādī ('the one who guides'), al-Manṣūr ('the one aided in victory') and of course al-Mahdī. However, as a reaction against this, pro-ʿAlid traditionists transmitted ḥadīths in which it was claimed that the Mahdī could not be just any descendant of the Prophet, but would have to be a descendant of Fāṭima. This view became accepted in wider circles.[36]

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[34] The Zoroastrian apocalypse *Zand Ī Wahman Yasn* uses almost the same language as the Legend when it comes to the description of the Sons of Hāshim, and it adds a pun when it calls them 'Sons of Xēšm', which means 'Sons of a demon'; Cereti, *The Zand Ī Wahman Yasn*, pp. 136–139 (t), pp. 153–158 (tr), and Boyce, *Textual Sources*, pp. 92–93. For a detailed discussion of Zoroastrian apocalyptic responses to Islam, see Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation*, pp. 48–68.

[35] Madelung, 'al-Mahdī', p. 1231.

[36] The restriction and rejection of the general 'Hashimite' claim is clearly voiced in

In the kingdom of Mahdī ibn Fāṭima of Baḥīrā's vision there will be five kings. This echoes some of the ḥadīths in which the Mahdī will have descendants who rule after him. These predictions indicate that the belief in the Mahdī was not always directly linked to the end of times. Not only could he have descendants ruling after him, he may also hand over the rule to others and a second Mahdī was predicted by some to come at the end of time.[37]

*Sons of Sufyān*

The fourth animal to appear in Baḥīrā's vision, a panther 'clothed in clothes of blood',[38] is said to symbolize the Sons of Sufyān. There can be no doubt about the fact that this refers to another apocalyptic figure of Muslim tradition: the Sufyānī. He is, like the Mahdī, absent in the Qur'an, but belief in him developed in early Islam. In early ʿAbbasid times Muslim society must have been swarming with rumours about the appearance of this figure, since several insurrections in his name took place. When and how the belief in this figure developed precisely is a subject of debate amongst modern scholars. One of the questions is whether he came into being in pro-Umayyad circles, as a messianic hero, or in anti-Umayyad circles as an evil figure inimical to the Mahdī.

Canonical ḥadīth is virtually silent about the Sufyānī, but early traditionists had a great deal to say about him.[39] Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād includes a large number of ḥadīths about the Sufyānī in his *Kītāb al-fitan*. They mention, for example, his battles ('The Sufyānī will go out

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the following ḥadīth on authority of Qatāda: 'I said to Saʿīd b. Musīb: 'Is the Mahdī true?' He said: 'true'. I said 'from whom is he?'' He said: 'from Quraysh'. I said: 'from which Quraysh?'. He said: 'from the Banū Hāshim'. I said: 'from which Banū Hāshim?'. He said: 'from Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib'. I said: 'from which Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib?'. He said: 'from the descendants of Fāṭima"; See Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 261 (nr. 1022). A ḥadīth like this also serves as a refutation of the claim that the Mahdī would be the son of another Fāṭima, namely the daughter of Abū Muslim, who was venerated by the Khurramiyya. See: Fierro, 'On *al-Fāṭimī* and *al-Fāṭimiyyūn*', pp. 132–133.

[37] Madelung, 'al-Mahdī', p. 1234: 'he will be succeeded by caliphs of his own family or by the Ḳaḥṭānī. The Mahdī thus is not closely associated in these traditions with the end of the world, but some of them predict a second Mahdī who would conquer Constantinople and surrender the rule to Jesus upon his descent from heaven'. See for example Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 276 (nr. 1096) and p. 281 (nr. 1113).

[38] WS has the divergent reading 'a lamb clothed in the clothes of a wolf'.

[39] David Cook gives a lively description of him, based on a wide range of texts, in *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 122–136.

from the Wādī l-Yābis, the leader of Damascus will go out to fight him. And when he looks at his banner he will be defeated'),[40] his looks ('The Sufyānī will be a pale man, with curly hair, and whoever accepts money from him will have a hot stone on his belly on the Day of the Resurrection'),[41] and the length of his reign ('The Sufyānī will rule for the period of a pregnancy' or 'The Sufyānī will rule for three and half years').[42] Apart from featuring in apocalyptic traditions, historical sources refer to periodic insurrections of pro-Umayyad fighters who claimed to be the Sufyānī.

His name is unmistakably connected with Abū Sufyān, father of the first Umayyad Caliph Muʿāwiya and thus the ancestor of the first branch of the Umayyads. After the sudden death of the third Caliph Muʿāwiya II and the subsequent battle of Marj Rāhiṭ (684) the Sufyānī family lost power to Marwān, the eponym of 'the Marwānid branch' of the Umayyad Caliphate. While attempting to trace back this figure as far as possible, a number of scholars, notably Nöldeke, Snouck Hurgronje and Hartmann, have tried to find the origins of the belief in the Sufyānī still within the Umayyad period, as they thought that perhaps Khālid ibn Yazīd, son of the Caliph Yazīd and brother of Muʿāwiya II, who had lost out on the Caliphate, had wanted to arouse the hopes for a reinstatement of Sufyānid rule by spreading prophecies about a new Sufyānid rising to power.[43] They speculated that the Sufyānī was subsequently transformed into a Mahdī-like figure for Umayyad sympathisers in general after the ʿAbbasid revolution, and simultaneously into a violent opponent of the Mahdī in the eyes of Shiis and ʿAbbasids.[44]

Other scholars did not find grounds for this reconstruction. Lammens argued that the Sufyānī cannot be traced back further than the anti-ʿAbbasid revolt in Syria of the year 751, which was the first rebellion in the name of a 'Sufyānī'.[45] This rebellion, led by Abū

[40] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 190 (nr. 778).
[41] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 190 (nr. 779).
[42] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 188 (nr. 768).
[43] Nöldeke, 'Zur Geschichte der Omaijaden', p. 389; Hartmann, 'Der Sufyānī', p. 147. They based their ideas on a passage in the *Kitāb al-aghānī* about the possibility of Khālid's having invented the Sufyānī predictions (as suggested by Muṣʿab b. Abdallāh (d. 851)): Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, vol. 17, p. 341. Snouck Hurgronje did not know the passage of Abū l-Faraj, but made a similar suggestion in his essay 'Der Mahdi'. See his *Verspreide Geschriften*, vol. 1, p. 155, n. 3.
[44] Hartmann, 'Der Sufyānī', pp. 147–148.
[45] Lammens, 'Le Sofiānī', p. 136, and similarly: Wellhausen, *Das Arabische Reich*, p. 346.

l-Ward, governor of Qinnishrin under the Umayyads, put forth Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Abū Sufyān as its leader, calling him ʿAbū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī'. Al-Ṭabarī writes: '[the rebels] made Abū Muḥammad their leader and called men to follow him, saying "this is the Sufyānī who was mentioned".'[46] He soon had to flee to the Hijāz, where he was captured and killed during the Caliphate of al-Manṣūr.[47] Lammens believed that the messianic expectations about the Sufyānī developed out of this rebellion, and he interpreted some of the predictions concerning the Sufyānī as referring to the return of Abū Muḥammad, which led him to assume that the Syrians thought that he had not died but disappeared. He also believed that it was a strong Syrian national awareness that gave rise to the Sufyānī expectations rather than support for the Umayyads, and he believed that the figure was afterwards adopted by Shiis who made him into an Antichrist-like opponent of the Mahdī, an Anti-Mahdī, so to say.[48]

Madelung has tried to show on the basis of the large number of ḥadīths in the collection of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād that the Sufyānī was from the start an opponent of the Mahdī, a Dajjāl-like figure. He claims that there are no grounds for the assumption that pro-Syrian sentiment formed the root of the belief in him.[49] In ḥadīth he was from the start linked with the Mahdī, and the early predictions about his appearance are modeled on a well-known ḥadīth which must have originated in the Umayyad campaign in 692 against ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Zubayr, who after the death of Muʿāwīya II had rejected his successor Marwān and founded an anti-Caliphate in Mecca.[50] In this ḥadīth an expedition is sent against the Caliph in Mecca by 'a man of Quraysh whose maternal uncles are of Kalb'. Several decades after Ibn al-Zubayr this *ex eventu* prophecy was read as a real prophecy about the Mahdī, against whom apparently an expedition was going to be sent. Whereas orig-

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[46] '*fa-raʾasū ʿalayhim Abā Muḥammad wa-daʿaw ilayh wa-qālū "huwa l-Sufyānī llādhī kāna yudhkaru*"'; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, p. 53.

[47] al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, pp. 52–55; Maqdisi, *al-Badʾ wa-l-taʾrīkh*, vol. 6, pp. 73–74; Cobb, *White Banners*, pp. 46–48; Aguadé, *Messianismus*, pp. 148–150.

[48] Lammens, 'Le Sofiānī', p. 135.

[49] He stresses the fact that in the discussion about Khālid b. Yazīd's possible forgery Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī himself already rejected this speculation, saying that Sunnis and Shiis believe in him and that if Khālid had been known as the inventor Shiis would certainly not have mentioned him: Madelung, 'The Sufyānī', pp. 5–6, n. 2.

[50] Madelung, 'The Sufyānī', p. 10, p. 47 and *id*, 'Abdallāh ibn al-Zubayr'. The recycling of this *ex eventu* prophecy into a real prophecy was first recognized by Attema. See his: *De Mohammedaansche Opvattingen*, pp. 73–74.

inally the leader of the expedition must have referred to Yazīd, now he became 'a descendant of Yazīd', so a 'Sufyānid', who would send an unsuccessful expedition against the Mahdī. On the basis of the relevant ḥadīths in the *Kitāb al-fitan* of Nuʿaym, Madelung demonstrated that indeed there is no sign that the Sufyānī had an independent existence as a hero of Umayyad sympathisers.[51] The Sufyānī movements must have been inspired by the Sufyānī's 'being mentioned' in prophecies, without paying much attention to his originally being an opponent of the Mahdī.[52] Traditions about a 'positive' belief in the Sufyānī circulated at a later date as well, if we can believe an anecdote told by al-Masʿūdī. He claimed to have met a man in Jordan who had a book of more than three hundred pages containing proofs of the 'Imamate of the Umayyads' and their virtues, which contained, amongst other things a list of prophecies about the appearance of the Sufyānī and the return of power to the Umayyads.[53]

Be this as it may, the Sons of Sufyān who feature in Baḥīrā's vision are described in the same negative, Antichrist-like terms, as the Sufyānī in Nuʿaym's collection of ḥadīth. They stand in sharp contrast to the rule of Mahdī ibn Fāṭima, whose reign will be distinguished for its equity and peacefulness. The Sons of Sufyān will give free rein to their rage and anger against all Sons of Ishmael. And they will try to kill everyone, even women and children. As said, they are symbolised by a panther 'clothed in clothes of blood'.[54] It agrees with the Sufyānī's color in apocalyptic ḥadīth. Nuʿaym relates that a descendant of Abū Sufyān will go out from the Wādī l-Yābis with red banners or garments.[55]

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[51] While Aguadé in his analysis of the *Kitāb al-Fitan* (*Messianismus*, p. 162) simply concluded that Nuʿaym was himself very inimical to the figure of the Sufyānī, Madelung tries to show that if there had been positive ḥadīths about him, Nuʿaym would have included them. The arguments for this are that Nuʿaym included many contradictory ḥadīths which means that he did not select only those with which he agreed and that he transmits ḥadīths of two clearly pro-Umayyad traditionists (Ṣafwān b. ʿAmr al-Saksakī and Ḥarīz b. ʿUthmān al-Raḥabī) who would have talked about a heroic Sufyānī if they had had any belief in him (Madelung, 'The Sufyānī', pp. 29–30). Furthermore, the seemingly pro-Syrian aspects of the ḥadīth about the Sufyānī go back to the 'Zubayri' layer of the ḥadīth mentioned above. He also refutes Lammens' theory about belief in the reappearance of Abū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī; Madelung, 'The Sufyānī', p. 47.

[52] Madelung, 'The Sufyānī', p. 47.

[53] Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*, pp. 336–337.

[54] It may or may not be a coincidence that Nuʿaym includes a tradition which claims that the Sufyānī will send a man against the armies of the East with the name 'Panther' or 'Moon'; Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 207 (nr. 835).

[55] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 190 (nr. 780).

There are also indications that some of the historic appearances of Sufyānīs were accompanied with red banners. Abū Muḥammad al-Sufyānī, in whose name a rebellion took place just after the ʿAbbasid evolution dressed in red,[56] as did another Sufyānī who rose up shortly afterwards in Aleppo, al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya ibn ʿAlī.[57] During the war between al-Maʾmūn and al-Amīn, in the year 810, another Sufyānī appeared in Syria, called ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Khālid ibn Yazīd or 'Abū l-ʿAmayṭar'.[58] With the support of Kalbites, he ended up fighting against a Marwānid called Maslama ibn Yaʿqūb ibn ʿAlī, supported by Qays. Here it was the Marwānid who eventually received most of the pro-Umayyad support and dressed in red and raised red banners.[59]

A further parallel with apocalyptic ḥadīth is the prediction that the blood-colored panther will put the sword to all 'kingdoms' of the Sons of Ishmael and persecute them up to the mountain of Yathrib. As said, predictions in ḥadīth about the Sufyānī were modeled on the campaign of Yazīd against Ibn al-Zubayr, in which he is the one who sends an army to fight in Mecca. Several of the traditions with Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammad have the Sufyānī devastate Kufa. He will try to kill its inhabitants and whoever escapes will flee to Mecca. He then sends an army against them and another battle will take place in Medina. This is echoed in the *Legend*, in which the Sufyānī is allotted the same role of chasing the Muslims back to Arabia. All in all, it is clear that the predictions about the Sons of Sufyān in Baḥīrā's vision are closely related to the statements about the Sufyānī in Muslim tradition. The Christian apocalyptist of the *Legend* has not transformed the political movements and events of his time into his own unique prophecies but is rather drawing on the conventional apocalyptic repertoire of his age.

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[56] Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ahsrāf*, vol. 3, p. 170.

[57] Ibn al-ʿAdīm's *Zubdat al-ḥalab fī taʾrīkh Ḥalab* in Freytag, *Selecta ex historia Halebi*, pp. 12–13.

[58] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, p. 830; Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vol. 6, p. 110; Aguadé, *Messianismus*, pp. 151–153; Cobb, *White Banners*, pp. 56–63, Madelung, 'Abū 'l-ʿAmayṭar the Sufyānī'.

[59] Omar, *ʿAbbāsiyyāt*, p. 151. As I noted above, p. 56, white was more common for Umayyad uprisings. Red was used at times by Kharijites too, and also, of course, by the sect that was named after their color, the Muḥammira. Abel, in his identification of the bloody panther, has been somewhat confused by his redness. He does note the existence of 'Le Mahdi sufiyanide, figure née de l'espérance en un retour des Umayyades' (Abel, 'l'Apocalypse de Baḥīra', p. 7, p. 10), but he also identifies this red animal with the Muḥammira (Abel, 'l'Apocalypse de Baḥīra', p. 9).

*Sons of Joktan / Qaḥṭān*

The next ones to appear are the Sons of 'Qaḥṭān' (Syriac 'Yoqṭan'), who will come to the Promised Land.[60] They are symbolized by a yearling goat, in Syriac *ṣeprāyā d-ʿezzē*, one of the animals that feature in the Book of Daniel.[61] There is no doubt as to what this animal stands for. It is the 'Qaḥṭānī', another messianic figure of early Islam, who often appears in prophecies side by side with the Mahdī and the Sufyānī. He is the 'Mahdī' of the South-Arabians whose mythical ancestor was Qaḥṭān, the Arabic equivalent of the Biblical Joktan, great-grandson of Shem, son of Noah.[62] Canonical ḥadīth has integrated the most famous of the traditions about him: 'the Hour will not come until a man of Qaḥṭān comes forth who will lead the people with his staff'.[63] The traditions about him can be shown to be older than those about the Mahdī. They already existed in the first century of Islam, perhaps because of a general sense of disenchantment shown by South Arabian tribes toward the new regime. Or, as Geddes puts it: 'with the political control of the new state falling into the hands of the North Arabian tribe of Quraysh—presumably regarded as less politically adept and culturally inferior to themselves—some of the Yemenites of the highlands wished to return to the glorious past through the reinstitution of the kingdom of the messianic descendant of the 'Tubbaʿ'.'[64] According to Madelung the bulk of both positive and negative prophecies about a South Arabian messianic leader originate in Syria in Umayyad times,[65] whereas Geddes argued that they may be rooted in older, pre-Islamic hopes for the restoration of the Himyarite kingdom to its former glory.

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[60] They will come from the North according to the Syriac recensions and from the West according the Arabic recensions (probably a mistranslation of the Syriac *garbāyā*, which resembles the Arabic *gharb*, 'West'). Both make little sense.

[61] Dan 8:5,8:8, 8:21. In 8:21 he is identified as the King of Greece.

[62] Gen 10:25. Gottheil had already suggested that this animal was somehow linked to the South-Arabians ('A Christian Bahira legend', 2, pp. 195–196), but Abel misses the mark because he based his study of Baḥīrā's apocalypse only on MS Par. Ar. 215, in which the name is given erroneously as 'Nafṭān' instead of Yoktan or Qaḥṭān. He interprets this name as a corrupted form of 'Nubians' and connects this with the Kushites, who feature in other Christian apocalypses, notably Pseudo-Methodius; Abel, 'l'Apocalypse de Baḥīra', p. 7, pp. 10–11. Hoyland repeats this in his *Seeing Islam*, p. 276.

[63] Al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 9, p. 178; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 8, p. 183.

[64] Geddes, 'The Messiah in South Arabia', pp. 319–320.

[65] Madelung, 'Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ'.

In many ḥadīths in Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād's collection there are predictions about the appearance of a Yemenite Mahdī-like leader. Sometimes he is called the Qaḥṭānī, while in other cases he is known as the 'Amīr al-'Uṣab' or the 'Manṣūr' or 'Manṣūr al-Yaman'.[66] In several ḥadīths the Qaḥṭānī is predicted as the leader under whom the apocalyptic conquest of Constantinople would take place. The chains of transmission with Nuʿaym lead back to the Yemenite immigrants in Syria. The advent of a Yemenite leader at the end of time was integrated in the prophecies of others, but his role was made less prominent.[67] Often one can detect a process of compromise in the ḥadīths about him, for example when one finds the Qaḥṭānī acknowledged as a leader at the end of times, but in a role subservient to the Mahdī.[68]

In connection with the predictions in the *Legend* it is interesting to note that it was not in Syria but in Iraq where the first two rebellions in name of the Qaḥṭānī took place, the first of which already during the first century of Islam.[69] In total there were three such insurrections against the Umayyads in Iraq. In 700 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath al-Kindī rebelled against the infamous governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj, under whom he had been an army commander. His army occupied Kufa and Basra, where he gained support from the local *ashrāf* and *mawālī* who were discontented with the oppressive rule of the Umayyads in Iraq. Two or three years later he was defeated by al-Ḥajjāj.[70] Although there is little that points to a tribal dimension to the conflict,[71] we do know that Ibn al-Ashʿath called himself 'the Qaḥṭānī'.[72] In the case of the second claimant of the title of the Qaḥṭānī, Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab, who rebelled in Basra against

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[66] About these names see: Lewis, 'The Regnal titles', pp. 16–17; Madelung, 'Apocalyptic prophecies in Ḥimṣ', pp. 150–151. For a summary of the various themes in the Qaḥṭānī predictions see: David Cook, *Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 79–82.

[67] See the many examples given in Madelung, 'Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ'. See also the section 'Messianic deliverance is Southern' in: Bashear, 'Yemen in Early Islam', pp. 338–343.

[68] 'The Mahdī is only from Quraysh, and the Caliphate is only from Quraysh, but he will nevertheless have some Yemenite ancestors'; Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 282 (nr. 1118). Then again, he is sometimes the last ruler: 'the Qaḥṭānī comes after the Mahdī. By Him who sent me with the Truth, beyond him there is no one'; Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kītāb al-fitan*, p. 284 (nr. 1124), p. 287 (nr. 1136).

[69] A fact highlighted by Fierro in 'Al-Aṣfar again', pp. 204–205.

[70] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 67–71; Fierro, 'Al-Aṣfar again', pp. 200–202.

[71] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, p. 69.

[72] This is mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ in his *Kītāb al-burṣān wa-l-ʿuryān*, p. 155.

the Umayyads two decades later, the exploitation of tribal sentiments is more clearly discernable.[73] Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab was a governor of Khurasan, an office inherited from his father who had been on good terms with the Umayyads. However, Yazīd was imprisoned after favoring his own tribe too blatantly. When he escaped from prison in 720 he rebelled in Basra, where the local Southerners of Azd supported him, together with some of the Southerners amongst the Umayyad troops who had come from Syria. From Basra he extended his power to the East, into Persia, but his forces soon disintegrated. In response to the uprising more Northerners were given high positions in Iraq, perhaps fuelling messianic propaganda amongst the Southerners during the ensuing period. A third rebellion occurred in Syria in 745–746, when Thābit ibn Nuʿaym al-Ghāmidī, governor of the jund of Palestine, united Kalb in opposition to the last Umayyad Caliph Marwān II. Thābit's power soon covered Syria almost entirely. The Caliph, who had moved his seat from Damascus to Ḥarrān, had to fight his way back into Syria.[74] Thābit likewise claimed to fulfil the prophecy of the Qaḥṭānī.[75]

These three rebellions have been studied by Fierro in connection with her search for the meaning of the epithet al-Aṣfar, 'the yellow one', which was applied to a number of ostensibly unrelated people in early Arabic sources. In some cases one finds 'al-Aṣfar al-Qaḥṭānī'. Despite the fact that the connection with the South-Arabian Messiah is largely eclipsed by references in the sources to the Kharijite branch which was called Ṣufriyya[76] and by the question of the origin of the epithet 'Banū l-Aṣfar' for the Byzantines, Fierro has unearthed the connection between 'the yellow one' and South-Arabian messianic propaganda.[77] Thanks to al-Jāḥiẓ, who discusses this epithet in his *Kitāb al-burṣān wa-l-ʿurjān wa-l-ʿumyān wa-l-ḥūlān*,[78] it is known that these three

[73] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 73–76; Fierro, 'Al-Aṣfar again', pp. 200–204.

[74] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 98–99; Fierro, 'Al-Aṣfar', pp. 169–171.

[75] al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-burṣān wa-l-ʿuryān*, p. 155.

[76] See: Madelung and Lewinstein, 'Ṣufriyya'; Lewinstein, 'Making and Unmaking a Sect'.

[77] It is just one amongst many different apocalyptic names according to this pattern. In Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād's *Kitāb al-fitan* we also find 'al-Akbash', 'al-Abqaʿ' and 'al-Ashajj' for example.

[78] al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-burṣān wa-l-ʿuryān*, pp. 155–156. Al-ʿAlī drew attention to this passage in his study 'Alwān al-malābisa l-ʿarabiyya', part 2, p. 80.

rebels referred to themselves as 'al-Aṣfar al-Qaḥṭānī', although al-Jāḥiẓ himself is not at all sure why.[79] That al-Aṣfar could also be a name for other messianic rebels is clear from the case of Abū l-Sarāyā during the fourth civil war. He lead an uprising in the year 815 in the name of two ʿAlid imams, called himself 'al-Aṣfar ibn al-Aṣfar' and minted a coin inscribed with the name 'al-Fāṭimī l-Aṣfar'.[80]

It is interesting to look at this conundrum in relation to the appearance of the 'Sons of Qaḥṭān' in the *Legend*. As indicated above, their symbol was a 'yearling goat'. The Syriac word, *ṣeprāyā d-ʿezzē*, and the Arabic (mis)translation of it in Apoc 2, *ṣafrānā l-maghribī*, have a clear resonance to 'al-Aṣfar'. The assumption that there is a connection between *seprāyā d-ʿezzē* and 'al-Aṣfar' may serve as a means to interpret an obscure prophecy, cited twice in Nuʿaym's *Kitāb al-fitan*, which speaks of someone being 'aṣfar':

> Al-Walīd and Rishdīn from Ibn Lahīʿa from Kaʿb ibn ʿAlqama from Sufyān al-Kalbī: a yellow youngster with a goatee will rise against the banner of the Mahdī [al-Walīd however did not mention 'yellow']. If he fights the mountains he will shake them [and al-Walīd said: 'he will crush them'] until he alights at Jerusalem.[81]

This tradition shares three elements with the prophecy in the *Legend*. The goatee, (Arabic: *liḥya*) seems to be either an allusion to the goat or the other way around. Both figures are young (at which point we have to remember that Joktan means 'younger son' in Hebrew) and both will reach the Holy Land.[82] We may safely assume that there was a tradition from which both the prediction in the *Legend* and the one cited above have been derived, even if we do not know all that lies

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[79] For that reason he also included a question about his identity is his collection of unanswerable questions. See: Pellat, *Le Kitāb al-tarbīʿ wa-l-tadwīr*, p. 80 (t).

[80] Fierro, 'Al-Aṣfar again', pp. 171–172.

[81] *yakhruju ʿalā liwāʾ al-Mahdī ghulām ḥadīth al-sinn khafīf al-liḥya aṣfar—wa-lam yadhkur al-Walīd aṣfar—law qātala l-jibāl la-hazzahā—wa-qāla l-Walīd la-haddahā—ḥattā yanzila Īliyā*; Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, pp. 214–215 (nr. 858), and also p. 258 (nr. 1012).

[82] The presence in Jerusalem has its parallel in traditions about al-Yamānī killing Quraysh in Bayt al-Maqdis. See for example Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 274 (nr. 1080): al-Yamānī will appear and he will kill Quraysh in Bayt al-Maqdis. And at his hands the *malāḥim* will take place'. One also has to think here of the apocalyptic Geniza fragment that has become known as 'On that day'. It mentions the struggle between the King of the East and the King of the West, followed by the King from Joktan, who captures the Holy Land. In light of the existence of distinct prophecies about a South-Arabian messianic leader there is reason to assume that this Hebrew text refers to him, rather than to the Arab conquests, especially since a South-Arabian name like Yoktan is not an obvious symbol for Muḥammad. See: Lewis, 'On that day', p. 199.

behind the allusions. It is well possible that the ḥadīth in question and the epithet 'al-Aṣfar' in general have their roots in the very goat of the Book of Daniel, the Syriac word for which has been either intentionally or inadvertently Arabized.[83]

The last aspect of the prophecy in the *Legend* which deserves attention in connection with the Islamic tradition and the actual historical rebellions concerns the 'Sons of Qaḥṭān', who are said to be the 'people from Qaṭar', meaning in Syriac the larger area of the East-Syrian diocese Bēt Qaṭrāyā, which encompassed the coastal lands of the North-East of the Arabian peninsula down to Oman.[84] Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab came from an Azdī family, or at least could pass as an Azdī.[85] Thābit ibn Nuʿaym also belonged to a subtribe of Azd.[86] They were South Arabians in the genealogical sense of the word, inasmuch as their tribes traced themselves back to 'Qaḥṭān'. But the same was not true, as is the case with many tribes, in the geographical sense. Many Azdīs had settled in Basra, but their homeland was Oman. The *Legend*, Iraq-oriented as it is, based its predictions on the insurrections in the region, or on extant prophecies from the region, and hence explains that the Sons of Qaḥṭān are the people from Qaṭar, even if the messianic prophecies were less specific and originated, if Madelung is right, in Himyarī national sentiment in Syria. This East-Arabian focus is absent in the prophecies of Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, who collected his material in Syria.

### *Mahdī ibn ʿĀ'isha*

After the Qaḥṭānī a strong and mighty lion appears that will trample all. His days will form a climax in the apocalyptic events. He symbolises a second Mahdī, who will claim that he has come to 'turn the world to one faith and to the acknowledgement of truth', and he will direct his

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[83] I should note that the root *ṣ-f-r* is also used in Arabic in connection with goats, as for example in *ṣufra*, for she-goat. My suggestion of a link with the Book of Daniel is not to say that the hypothesis of Fierro ('Al-Aṣfar again', p. 205, p. 209) that the name has something to do with the South-Arabian custom of rubbing one's body with *wars*, a yellow dye, is incorrect. I would rather want to consider the possibility that this custom was a reason for people to believe that the prophecy of Daniel applied to them. I will deal with this issue in a future publication.

[84] See: Fiey, 'Les diocèses syriens orientaux', pp. 209–219; Healey, 'The Christians of Qatar'.

[85] Fierro, 'Al-Aṣfar again', p. 202.

[86] Fierro, 'Al-Aṣfar again', p. 200.

anger to Christians and Jews. It is described how they will suffer from his violent persecution and how their belief will be put to the test. This will be God's chastisement of the Christians who have forsaken their true belief. As I have indicated above, it is not unusual to find more than one Mahdī in Muslim prophecies. There are several ḥadīths in which the coming of a second Mahdī is predicted, and some of these ḥadīths bear a close resemblance to the scenario of the *Legend* and predict the rule of the Mahdī, followed by the Qaḥṭānī and then another Mahdī. There are, however, no predictions to be found in apocalyptic ḥadīth that refer to a Mahdī with this name.[87] One immediately gets the suspicion that his name is chosen in order to present him in contrast to the utopian Mahdī who will precede him, by drawing on the evil image that Shiis have of ʿĀ'isha bint Abū Bakr as a rival of Fāṭima and arch-enemy of her family. We notice that whereas Mahdī ibn Fāṭima appears in the *Legend* much like he does in Muslim tradition, this Mahdī is some kind of deceiver. And just as the Dajjāl will claim to be the Messiah, this 'anti-Mahdī' will falsely claim to be the Mahdī. Just like the Antichrist will try to make all people his followers, this 'anti-Mahdī' will try to unite all people in the faith.

Again Muslim tradition appears to be encrypted in the Syriac: the angel tells Baḥīrā that this lion is 'the strongest of all', *taqīp taqīpīn*. This could well be a reference to the tribe of Thaqīf, who were fierce enemies of the Prophet. Several Thaqafīs, amongst whom most prominently al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yusūf, went down in history as oppressors and became the symbolical enemies of Quraysh.[88] This warranted their place in apocalyptic tradition, for the Prophet was believed to have predicted: 'amongst Thaqīf there will be a liar and a spoiler. The liar is al-Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubayd, the spoiler is al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf'.[89]

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[87] As we shall see below, the prophecy about this figure can hardly be *ex eventu*. Abel ('Changements politiques', p. 29, n. 1) looked nevertheless for a historic Mahdī ibn ʿĀ'isha, drawing attention to the rebellious figure of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Ibrāhīm al-Imām, known under the name of Ibn ʿĀ'isha, who was executed at the orders of al-Ma'mūn in 825; al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 7, pp. 78–80.

[88] See: Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 96–97, and Lecker, 'Thaḳīf'. David Cook equally suggests that this Mahdī is an opponent of the Shii Mahdī but traces him back to the Sunnī esteem for Muṣʿab b. al-Zubayr, who was on close terms with ʿĀ'isha; David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, pp. 134–135, n. 208.

[89] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 224; al-Masʿūdī, *Les Prairies d'Or*, vol. 5, pp. 265–266; al-Tirmidhī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, p. 729. Similar ḥadīths: Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 85 (nrs. 326, 327). See also David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, p. 20, p. 95.

How Mahdī ibn ʿĀ'isha will deal with Muslims is not made explicit. In Apoc 1 it is stated that there will be much suffering during his time generally, and in Apoc 2 his actions are directed at the non-Muslims, whom he persecutes and chastises. The message may be that Mahdist propaganda is misleading; this deceiver will say that he is the Mahdī, but Christians who convert will regret following him. The *Legend* wants to assert that if there is a persecution of Christians during his time it is not because they are Christian but rather because they are not true Christians.

### *The Green King*

The confirmation of this fact lies in the next episode of the Apocalypse. A man in a green garment will appear and rule the world, in anticipation of the 'King of the Romans' who will return to power at the end of time. Different explanations as to who this green man is are given in Apoc 1 and 2. In the former we read: 'this is the last kingdom of the sons of Hagar, with which will be their end and their disappearance from the earth' ({3.18)}. More elaborately we read in Apoc 2 ({17.94}–{17.99}):

> a king dressed in green clothes will come from the East and through him there will be great peace and quiet in the world. Churches will be built and monasteries will be restored. And he is the last one whom the world expects to come at the end of the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael.

These explanations are different: in the first passage his rule is included in the sequence of Muslim kings ('the last kingdom') and in the second passage the ruler comes 'at the end of the kingdoms'. The redactor of WS, in the spirit of Pseudo-Methodius, elaborates on this prediction and takes the opportunity to condemn his coreligionists who have converted to Islam. He described how this king will wreak vengeance on all those who 'denied the faith of their fathers' and 'cut their foreskin' ({17.97}).

Since this utopian hero is not easily identifiable, my reading of him reflects some degree of speculation. Obviously, he first evokes associations with al-Khiḍr (or: al-Khaḍir), the Green Man. He is a mythic figure more than an eschatological one, a symbol of fecundity and prosperity, in whom Jews, Christians and Muslims alike believed. In defining him one inevitably has to dissect his amalgamate identity, as he has traits of Moses' servant, Alexander's cook, St. George and the prophet

Elijah.[90] His dip into the Spring of Life left him green and has given him eternal life. If we can recognize al-Khiḍr in the green king of the *Legend* it would be because of the Elijah facet of his identity, since he is the only one with an eschatological role to play.[91] On two grounds one may nevertheless hesitate to identify this king as Elijah. First of all, we see that Elijah still appears later on in the *Legend* ({17.114}). Furthermore, Elijah's return at the end of the world is for the purpose of combating the Deceiver, not for kingship.[92] In that respect the green man appears more like a Prester John *avant la lettre*.[93] The problem is that there are no other writings from early ʿAbbasid times which point at the belief in the advent of a triumphant Christian king from the East who will restore peace for Christians. Yet we have to assume that the prophecy was meaningful to the audience of the *Legend* without further hints.

It is worth noting that there is no explicit statement to be found concerning the fact that this king will be a Christian himself. The solution

[90] See the detailed studies Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr*; Friedländer, *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman*; Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. 1, pp. 319–336, as well as Wensinck, 'al-Khaḍir (al-Khiḍr)' and Tottoli, 'Elijah'.

[91] One can see that at least Arabic-speaking Christians were aware of the Muslim connection between the two figures in the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, where several references to Elijah are accompanied with the remark: 'and the Arabs call him al-Khiḍr' (Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios*, vol. 1, p. 5, p. 19 (t), vol. 2, p. 4, p. 17 (tr)).

[92] One could argue that our scenario in which both al-Khiḍr and Elijah appear separately could be a response to the Islamic appropriation of Elijah and his 'absorption' into al-Khiḍr. In other words, as the last Mahdī will turn out to be a kind of Dajjāl, al-Khiḍr will come to annihilate him, but this seems somewhat farfetched because there is no struggle between Mahdī ibn ʿĀ'isha and the green king.

[93] For the medieval belief in this Christian king living somewhere behind the Islamic lands, see the most important papers on the topic that have been collected in Beckingham and Hamilton, *Prester John*, and the chronological survey by Baum, *Die Verwandlungen des Mythos*, which shows that the earliest Western sources on him stem from the early twelfth century. In an earlier publication I have surmised that the Western Mediaeval interest in the apocalyptic material of the Legend was aroused by the expectations surrounding the advent of this king, and that furthermore the Green King may have been interpreted as Prester John (Roggema, The Legend of Sergius-Baḥīrā', p. 123) This is confirmed, in fact, by a passage in the *Liber Ostensor* of Jean de Rocquetaillade. This fourteenth-century Franciscan visionary discussed the *Apocalypse of Baḥīrā* and said it confirmed what he had received in a vision himself. About the green king he said: 'it will be a Christian king; the King of the Tartars who rules in Cambalech is a Christian. He is the one whom God designated to destroy the Saracens'; for this particular passage and a discussion of Jean de Rocquetaillade's interpretation of the apocalypse, see Boisset, 'Vision d'Orient', pp. 395–396, Schmieder, 'Christians, Jews, Muslims—and Mongols', pp. 288–294, and the edition of the work by Thévenaz Modestin and Morerod-Fattebert.

may in fact lie in yet another piece of eschatological propaganda from early ʿAbbasid times: the triumph of a Persian king coming from the East. It has been shown that belief in a savior-king coming from the East runs like a thread through Zoroastrian writings in this period, the ʿAbbasid rule being regarded as a 'foreign invasion' that would in due time be expelled. Zoroastrians believed that their Prophet had foretold the advent of three saviors, his sons, Ushedar, Ushedarmah and Shaoshant.[94] The latter will bring about the final triumph over evil at the end of time and was the central focus of Zoroastrian apocalyptic thought. It was believed that he would be aided by a royal messiah coming from India, or even China, called Shah Bahram Varjavand. That the advent of this savior was in the minds of Zoroastrians in early ʿAbbasid times can be shown from the references to the ʿAbbasids in their apocalypses (which are mostly updates of older texts). He was predicted to come with a thousand elephants, holding the banner of the Chosroes.[95] His victory over the Arabs would lead to the restoration of the Persian religion and state.[96] This figure was modeled upon Bahram Chobin, the Persian warlord who fought the Turks at the end of the sixth century and whose exploits had become legendary.[97] According to Cereti the prophecy about Shah Bahram Varjavand possibly has its roots in one of the sons of the Sassanian king Yazdegard III who fled to China after the Muslim conquest and served at the Chinese court.[98] It is not impossible that the hope for the advent of this savior-king has been taken up in the *Legend*. If so, it would mean that the *Legend* tries to paint a picture according to which the world, while approaching its Last Days, would return to the status quo of the era before Islam.[99] But all in all, the allusions to this king are too vague to reach a definite conclusion about him. Perhaps the most important historical fact that

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[94] Boyce, *Textual Sources*, pp. 20–21, Moazami, 'Millenialism, Eschatology', pp. 4–11.

[95] Tavadia, 'A Rhymed Ballad in Pahlavi', p. 31.

[96] Cereti, *The Zand Ī Wahman Yasn*, p. 145 (t), pp. 165–166 (tr).

[97] Czeglédy, 'Bahrām Čōbīn'; Destrée, 'Quelques reflexions sur le héros'.

[98] Cereti, 'On the date of the Zand I Wahman Yasn', pp. 248–249.

[99] In the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* ('The Book of the Rolls') it is prophesied that Christianity will triumph over Islam when the Kings of Persia ('Cyrus'), India and China make a pact with the Christian King and come to Jerusalem. This apocalyptic text is younger than the Legend, but it has clear parallels with our apocalypse and is much concerned with the Umayyads and early ʿAbbasids. For this reason, I think that this prophecy about this alliance of kings also may be older than the thirteenth century hopes and expectations concerning the Mongols; Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter', pp. 309–310 (t), 240–242 (tr).

we need to draw attention to is that al-Maʾmūn changed the official color of the Caliphate from black to green when he appointed his ʿAlid successor. This will be discussed further below.

It is only after the period ushered in by this green king that the King of the Romans will appear and rule the world for 'one and a half weeks', which will be the time of peace 'which Christ has mentioned'.[100] One notices that he is a truly eschatological figure whose imminent advent is not to be expected. From this point onwards we find the traditional Christian eschatological repertory, which includes the devastating outbreak of the 'unclean nations', followed by the appearance of the Antichrist, Elijah's victory over him, the second coming of Christ and the resurrection. The conciseness of these predictions leaves no doubt that these are standard concepts that did not need any further explanation or justification. The only noteworthy aspect of this section of the apocalypse is the fact that Elijah will return alone at the end of times, rather than, as in most Christian apocalypses, in the company of Enoch.[101]

### *Sitz im Leben*

Following these attempts to identify the symbolical appearances in Baḥīrā's apocalypse, I now would like to take a closer look at its *Sitz im Leben* and its implications for the interpretation of the apocalypse as a whole. To get a better insight into the apocalypse it is necessary to return to predictions about the reign of the seventh Hāshimite, who will mark the end of the tyrannous Hāshimite rule. All people will rise up against one another in that time, and 'Babel' will be destroyed by its own inhabitants. This was not just a prophetic guess, since it alluded to real events: during the siege of the city (812–813), at the height of the war between al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn, many of Baghdad's buildings were demolished, the treasury was looted, and the pillars of

[100] The period of one and a half weeks (ten and a half years) is based on the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. See: Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 43 (t), vol. 2, p. 69 (tr.). It can also be noted that the final part of Apoc 2 contains many reverberations of this apocalypse.

[101] This is to say that our apocalyptist preferred the words of Malachi 4:5 and Mark 9:12 to the 'two witnesses' of the Book of Revelation 11, who are conventionally identified with Elijah and Enoch; see Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, pp. 134–139. Salomon of Basra's *Book of the Bee* likewise has only Elijah (Budge, *The Book of the Bee*, p. 149 (t), p. 131 (tr)). This issue deserves further investigation.

churches were smashed to pieces to serve as projectiles. However, as the apocalypse continues, the final destruction of the city will be brought about by Mahdī ibn Fāṭima, who will succeed the Hashimites and who is predicted to have five horns in Apoc 1. This cannot have been a reference to a historic happening, since the ʿAbbasid dynasty was never taken over by 'Mahdist' rule, neither during the time of the seventh Caliph nor later. This is the principal reason for dating the apocalypse to the era of al-Maʾmūn.[102]

The question of why the future would have looked like this for a Christian apocalyptist during that time can be answered by drawing attention to two interrelated historical episodes during the period following the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd. First of all, just after the war, when the Caliphate was in chaos and al-Amīn had been killed, ʿAlids saw their chance to make a serious bid for power. There were a number of attempts by ʿAlids to take over the reins of the Caliphate during the years 813–816, some of which met with considerable success at various moments in Iraq and Arabia. The first, a year-long upsurge in

[102] Since the rule of the ʿAbbasids did not come to an end, and a Mahdī 'with five horns' did not appear, we could say it is unnecessary to look for further historic circumstances to which the following predictions may refer, as they would not be *ex eventu* prophecies. Abel nevertheless tried this (Abel, 'l'Apocalypse de Baḥīra', p. 9), and he did not refer to problem of the five horns that are supposed to be in between. The problem is that if one ignores the five descendants of the Mahdī and considers the ensuing prophecies also as *ex eventu*, there are no further connections with contemporary events. The Sufyānī prediction cannot refer to Abū l-ʿAmayṭar's uprising in 810 in Syria, because it was not preceded by an uprising that could have been considered as the advent of Mahdī ibn Fāṭima, and furthermore this Sufyānī dressed white and his Marwanid rival red. A Qaḥṭānī uprising did not occur at the time. Nevertheless, the importance of Abel's work lies in the fact that he clearly recognized the connection with the early reign of al-Maʾmūn. Landron and Gero have come to the same conclusion about the date, and have both asserted that there is no ground for attributing it to a later period. Indeed, no compelling reason for a later date has been advanced as yet; Landron, *Chrétiens et musulmans en Irak*, pp. 72–73; Gero, 'The legend of the monk Baḥīrā', p. 54, n. 43. Griffith reached the same conclusion and dispelled Graf's hypothesis of a later date on the grounds of an alleged dependency on the *Apology of al-Kindī* (Griffith, 'Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥīrā', p. 157, p. 159; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, pp. 145–149, esp. 148–149). Gottheil, however, interpreted the King of Rome as the Crusaders and therefore dated the text much later (Gottheil, 'A Christian Bahira Legend', part 1, pp. 192–197). Other scholars who give a later dating without arguments for it probably depend on Gottheil's interpretation. See among others: Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 284; Abuna, *Adab al-lugha l-ārāmiyya*, pp. 426–427; Caspar and Khoury, 'Bibliographie du Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien', p. 152; Sākō, 'Bibliographie du Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien', p. 286; Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', p. 36.

Iraq led by al-Ḥasan al-Hirsh, occurred during the earliest days of al-Maʾmūn's reign, when he was still residing in Khurasan, the part of the Caliphate which his father had allotted to him and from which he initially intended to rule. This was followed immediately by an uprising with a much bigger impact, the one which was led by Abū l-Sarāyā, a disgruntled ex-soldier of the ʿAbbasid army.[103] He rebelled in the name of the Ḥasanid Imām Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭabāṭabā. He gained a large following of people, calling for *al-riḍā min āl Muḥammad wa-l-ʿamal bi-l-kitāb wa-l-sunna* (a leader from Muḥammad's family upon whom the community agrees and conduct in accordance with the Holy Book and the Sunna).[104] Such had once been the slogan of the ʿAbbasid revolution itself. Now the ʿAlids called for an 'agreed-upon leader', which to them meant a descendant of ʿAlī, just as it had at the time of the ʿAbbasid revolution.[105] This was a key propaganda point, which al-Ḥasan al-Hirsh had also used. Apoc 2 even echoes it when it says, in reference to Mahdī ibn Fāṭima: 'And behold, he observes all commands and laws of his father Muḥammad, all days of his life and of the sons after him' ({17.68}). After a month the Imām Ibn Ṭabāṭabā died, but Abū l-Sarāyā then put forth a Ḥusaynid Imām. His movement gained control over Southern Iraq and at some point even threatened Baghdad. Abū l-Sarāyā also sent two ʿAlids to Mecca and Medina where they were welcomed. In 816 the movement was defeated and Abū l-Sarāyā was executed. Soon after that the brother of the Imām whom al-Maʾmūn was to appoint as his heir rebelled in Yemen, and his uncle was declared Caliph in Mecca.

There is little doubt that al-Maʾmūn's radical decision to appoint ʿAlī l-Riḍā, grandson of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, as his heir in 817 came in one way or another as a response to this turmoil. This is the second historical development which comes to mind when we read the prediction about Mahdī ibn Fāṭima in the *Legend*.[106] During this time al-Maʾmūn changed his black clothes for green ones and told others to do so.

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[103] A detailed account of the events during this rebellion is given by Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate*, pp. 207–211.

[104] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, part 3, 978–979.

[105] Al-Maʾmūn decision to call his heir al-Riḍā was undoubtedly an attempt to silence this call. For the different connotations of the slogan: Crone, 'On the meaning of the ʿAbbasid Call to al-Riḍā'.

[106] Abel already drew attention to Maʾmūn's decision and thought that Mahdī ibn Fāṭima may refer to him. Abel, 'l'Apocalypse de Baḥīra', pp. 8–9.

This decision was not at all welcomed in Baghdad, where Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī was pronounced Caliph as a reaction against this move. This 'anti-Caliphate' lasted until al-Ma'mūn came to Baghdad in 819. By then ʿAlī l-Riḍā had already died—as the result of being poisoned according to Shiis—and the green dress code reverted to black. Al-Ma'mūn is said to have tried unsuccessfully to win over another descendant of ʿAlī to be his heir. Only just before his death he passed on the Caliphate to his brother Abū Isḥāq.[107]

It has been argued that al-Ma'mūn's decision—taken during a period of political upheaval—was an attempt to bring the two branches of the Prophet's Family back together, to reconcile the rivalling religious factions, and to unify the faith.[108] He may himself, in fact, have been influenced by the waves of apocalyptic propaganda, such as the predictions that the Prophet's community would remain for 200 years and then hand over the rule to the Mahdī.[109] Intriguingly, a letter has come down to us which purports to be a written defense by al-Ma'mūn of his appointment of ʿAlī l-Riḍā and which clearly expresses such apocalyptic expectations:

> "God will attain his design" (65:3) and manifest His decree one day. But if you refuse everything but the lifting of the veil and the peeling of the staff, (know that) al-Rašīd has informed me on the authority of his ancestors and of what he found in the Book of the Reign (*Kitāb al-Dawla*) and elsewhere that after the seventh of the descendants of al-ʿAbbās no pillar will remain standing for the Banū l-ʿAbbās. Prosperity will continue to be fastened for them to his life. So when I take leave, take you leave from it (?), and when you are deprived of my person, seek for yourself a fortified refuge. But alas, there will be nothing for you but the sword. The Ḥasanī, the avenger and destroyer, will come to you and mow you down, and the Sufyānī, the subduer. But your blood will be spared by the Qā'im, the Mahdī, except for your just claim.[110]

The fact that the letter is contained only in Shii sources casts some doubt on its authenticity. Yet, as Madelung stated, it contains nothing

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[107] Madelung, 'New Documents concerning al-Ma'mūn', p. 346.

[108] For a discussion of the different interpretations of al-Ma'mūn's motivations in modern scholarship see: Tor, 'An Historiographical Re-examination'.

[109] David Cook, 'The Apocalyptic year 200/815–816'.

[110] The letter is found in two Shii works. Ibn Ṭāwūs included it is his *Kitāb al-ṭarā'if fī maʿrifat al-ṭawā'if* and al-Majlisī reproduced it from there in his *Biḥār al-anwār*. A discussion and translation of the letter can be found in Madelung, 'New Documents concerning al-Ma'mūn'. For this particular passage: p. 343.

that betrays it as a blatant Shii forgery. Moroever, it is fully in line with the spirit of the messianic expectations of the time.[111]

Whether this particular letter is authentic or not, there is still no doubt that the swarm of apocalyptic prophecies and events of this era impelled the Christian apocalyptist to join in with the current wave of political prophesying. However, rather than foretelling a sudden Byzantine reconquest, the *Legend* first lets history run the course that Muslim apocalyptists had set out, before revealing how and when the salvation of Christians was to follow. A conspicuous part of the prophecy after the collapse of the ʿAbbasids is the serenity and equity that will characterize the rule of Mahdī ibn Fāṭima. At first sight this seems an echo of the Mahdist propaganda of the time, but it could also be a response to the actual news of ʿAlī l-Riḍā's appointment as heir. In other words: it may be the case that it was not the chaos in Iraq during the rebellions between 813–816 that caused the apocalyptist to set down his views in writing, but rather the prospect of a reunified Islam that was at the horizon (although in reality the response in Baghdad to al-Maʾmūn's decision gave anything but the impression that it would be a force of unification). If this was indeed the case one wonders whether the prediction of the green king somehow ties in with al-Maʾmūn's change of the official color of the Caliphate. The justification for choosing green was, at least according to one source, the fact that this is the color of garments in paradise.[112] The *Legend* may have wanted to counteract the propagandistic aspect of the new dress code by prophesying about a future paradisiacal figure who would eventually reward Christians.

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[111] Madelung, 'New Documents concerning al-Maʾmūn', pp. 345–346.

[112] Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā's *al-Fakhrī fī l-ādāb al-sulṭāniyya wa-l-duwal*. For the relevant passage see: Cherbonneau, *Histoire des Khalifes Abbasides*, p. 8 (t), p. 34 (tr.); see also Gabrieli, *al-Maʾmūn e gli ʿAlidi*, pp. 37–38, n. 4. For the Qurʾanic reference to green garments in paradise see Q 76:21 and Q 18:31. The suggestion that it was in fact a Shii color has been rejected on account of the absence of references to it in early sources (Omar, *ʿAbbāsiyyāt*, p. 150) although it has been noted that al-Mukhtār had a green banner (Tor, 'An Historiographical Re-examination', p. 108, n. 25). al-Jahshiyārī tells the anecdote of a notable at the ʿAbbasid court who scoffs al-Maʾmūn's vizier al-Faḍl b. Sahl (who came from a Zoroastrian background) for choosing the color of the 'Chosroes and the Magians' (al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-wuzarā'*, p. 256), but if this were the predominant connotation of the color it is perhaps unlikely that it would have been chosen. Al-ʿAlī found two references to green garments of Sassanians; al-ʿAlī, 'Alwān al-malābisa l-ʿarabiyya', p. 77.

The sharp edges of the 'counterhistorical' aspect of the apocalypse come to the fore most clearly in the developments after Mahdī ibn Fāṭima. The apocalyptist has cleverly decided to grant this Mahdī his existence, as eventually his rule would have to make space for the bloodthirsty Sufyānī, about whom the Shiis themselves had had so much to say. In other words: the peaceful Mahdī is just a phase in the unfolding of history towards the end of Islam. What we notice is that the motive of the Muslims eventual forced return to the place where they came from, as found in the earliest Christian apocalypses, is now dressed in new garb. The idea that the Arabs would at some point towards the end of time be driven back to the place where they came from, by the Byzantine Emperor and the King of Ethiopia, is present in the oldest Christian apocalypses about Islam. It is inspired by Daniel 11:9, which mentions that the King of the South 'shall return into his own land'.[113] In the *Legend*, Muslim prophesies about the Sufyānī are taken up to reinforce this idea, as he becomes instrumental in the eradication of Muslim rule.[114]

The implication of this metahistorical picture, in which the rule of the Mahdī represents nothing but a phase in history, is that he is not truly the Mahdī. A mechanism is at work here that lies at the root of the phenomenon of competitive prophesying and underscores both the strength and weakness of 'revelatory' propaganda. That *ex eventu* prophecies in apocalyptic writings serve to lend weight to the probability of the realisation of real prophecies is more than clear. But the same mechanism works, even more forcefully, when the apocalyptist really foretells the future. By allowing these Mahdīs and other apocalyptic figures their share in a vision of the future, as it were, their appearance in real life becomes a portent of those who are to follow; just as a Jewish apocalyptic prophecy turned the Byzantine Emperor's victory over

[113] For example: Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, pp. 38–39 (t), vol. 2, pp. 62–63 (tr.); Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, p. 21 (t), p. 38 (tr), and generally about this theme: Martinez, 'The King of Rūm and the King of Ethiopia'.

[114] In WS it is asserted that the Green King will also chase the Ishmaelites back to Arabia. Because of the resemblance of the role of the Sufyānī in our apocalypse to the role of the King of Rūm in other Christian apocalypses Hoyland has identified the red panther as the King of Rūm. He rejects Abel's proposition of the Muḥammira and proposes instead to use the Judeo-Persian apocalypse of Daniel as a key to interpret this animal. In that text it is predicted that after twenty-four Arab kings there will be 'a king from the Romans who will wear red clothes and will break the empire of the Ishmaelites', but it is clear that this will not do here, since the name of the Sufyānī is recognizable in all versions of the legend; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 275–276.

the Ishmaelites into a sign of the coming of the Messiah.[115] This mechanism is at the basis of the conceptualisation of eschatological 'deceivers', such as the Antichrist, the Dajjāl etc. In other words Baḥīrā's apocalypse means that the very first appearance of a Mahdī constitutes a confirmation of the validity of the Christian salvific scheme. This mechanism, however, also highlights the biggest limitation of apocalyptic writings: they cannot be used to prove the absence of a thing. For Baḥīrā to prophesy that there will be no Mahdī, for a Jewish apocalyptist to prophesy that Jesus is not the Messiah or for a Muslim traditionist to prophecy that there will be no Qaḥṭānī is absurd, because the 'prophets', i.e. the propagandists, would immediately blow their own cover. The genre only allows for an indirect refutation, by admitting the existence of other people's heroes and casting them in a different role from the one which is claimed for them.[116] Within the jungle of apocalyptic speculations of early Islam, there was always the voice of a group of traditionists who claimed that there was no Mahdī but Christ, who at the time of his second coming would break crosses, kill pigs, unearth the unadulterated Bible and proclaim that Islam is the only right religion. In order for the *Legend* to reveal, in response, that Christ is not the Mahdī these two have to appear as distinct figures.

Our sense that this roundabout rescue operation of Christian salvation is the foremost function of the apocalypse is strengthened by the fact that it does not predict the downfall of Islamic rule and the advent of the Last Emperor within the lifetime of its first generation of readers. It only shows that eventually Islam will disappear, towards the end of this world.[117] Although the Day of Judgment is not imminent, readers nevertheless get a preview of the vindication of the Christian faith. It is plausible, if not probable, that this was meant in the first place as a counterweight to the attraction that Islam may have had for Christians in a time of energetic Mahdist propaganda.

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[115] For example in the *Secrets of Rabbi Simon ben Yohay*, a Jewish apocalypse of the early Islamic period and in a *Responsum on the Coming of the Messiah* by the eleventh century Hai Gaon. See: Lewis, 'An apocalyptic vision', p. 318 and p. 333.

[116] This fact obviously accounts for much of the competitive prophesying amongst Muslims as found in the *fitan* literature. Along these lines Zaman has argued that part of the Muslim prophecies of the time are not true messianic propaganda but counter-traditions that were produced by pro-Abbasids to balance off the 'Alid propaganda; see his 'Early 'Abbasid response to Apocalyptic propaganda'.

[117] This is why I agree most adamantly with Biale, who argued that historical apocalypses need to be categorized as 'counterhistory'; David, 'Counter-History and Jewish Polemics'.

To conclude this discussion let me draw attention to one theme in the *Legend* which does not occur in the two apocalyptic parts, but which has an apocalyptic touch. When Baḥīrā takes refuge in the desert he announces to the Arabs that they will have a kingdom for seventy years (in prophetic language: 'ten weeks of years') ({6.5}).[118] The Arabs readily accept the monk in their community after he has foretold their fortunate future. This prophecy of seventy years does not feature in the apocalyptic sections. At first sight it does not fit with the predictions contained there, since those cover a much longer period of time. It must have been taken from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, in which the time span of seventy years for the Sons of Ishmael plays a central role.[119] In the case of that apocalypse it has been interpreted by modern scholars as a genuine prediction of the downfall of the Arab power around the year 692.[120] It is not unlikely, however, that the same prophecy is now applied specifically to the ʿAbbasid Caliphate, which was indeed approaching its seventieth year during the time of the civil war.[121] The redactor's justification of such a reinterpretation of Pseudo-Methodius' prophecy could have been that since the Umayyads had not been descendants of the Prophet, it was only during the ʿAbbasid Caliphate that one could start counting the years of the rule of the 'Sons of Muḥammad'.

[118] A2 has 'seven weeks'.

[119] Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 10, p. 23, p. 35 (t), vol. 2, p. 15, p. 39, p. 57 (tr).

[120] Brock, 'Syriac Views of Emergent Islam', p. 19; Reinink, 'Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende', p. 104, pp. 106–107.

[121] The Latin recension has nine and a half weeks instead. Möhring made the interesting suggestion that 'week of years' was reinterpreted as seventy rather than seven years so that the number thus reached was very close to 666, the number of the Beast in the Book of Revelation (Rev 13:18). The text would then confirm the prediction that Islam would only last 666 years; Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit*, p. 129, n. 10. For Pope Innocent III's prediction to this intent, see: Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 194.

CHAPTER FOUR

# BAḤĪRĀ'S TEACHINGS

## *Breaking crosses*

There are two episodes in the *Legend* ({4}–{5}) which connect Baḥīrā's vision on Mount Sinai, discussed in the previous chapter, with his eventual encounter with Muḥammad. First of all the monk goes to the Emperors of Byzantium and Persia, Maurice and Chosroes, to inform them of their imminent loss of territory to the Arabs. This passage serves as a chronological reference point, since it is said that just after this episode Maurice was killed by one of his generals. It is a reference to Phocas' coup d'état in the year 602.[1] This voyage is the lead-up to the middle section of the *Legend* which centers on the monk's meetings with Muḥammad. In this chapter four significant themes of this section will be discussed in detail and it will be explained how they function with regard to the question how the Legend frames the relationship between the rise of Islam and contemporary Christianity. The first of those four issues to be discussed is the monk's attitude to the cult of the cross.

After having accomplished his task of informing the Emperors about their future, Baḥīrā begins to preach that people should bow in worship to only one cross, rather than to many. It is this mission which forces him to flee to Arabia, after local churchmen obstruct his attempts to bring down the number of crosses on display and banish him from their lands. This peculiar passage has been discussed by Gero in the light of a possible connection with Byzantine iconoclasm.[2] In order to understand the rationale behind this passage I will discuss Gero's hypothesis and analyze the function of this section in light of the apologetic mechanisms at work in the *Legend*.

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[1] The passage functions as an antidote to Muslim propaganda which claims that Muḥammad had predicted the victories of Islam. The Legend suggests that these victories were already known to be predestined by God, before Muḥammad knew anything about his grand future.

[2] Gero, 'The legend of the monk Baḥīrā'.

Gero drew attention to the similarity between Baḥīrā's attitude to the cross and that found in one version of the *Epistle of Nilus of Ancyra to Olympiodorus Eparchos*. Nilus of Ancyra, a prolific monastic writer of the fifth century, is accredited with a voluminous corpus of letters.[3] Two of his letters, the *Epistle to Olympiodorus* together with his *Epistle to Heliodorus the Silentiary*, became the subject of discussion during the Church councils surrounding the Byzantine iconoclast controversy in the eighth and ninth centuries.[4] The latter epistle refers in passing to the beneficial aspects of icons in a tale about St. Plato of Ancyra and hence played into the hands of the iconodules, who employed it as a patristic proof text during the second council of Nicaea in 787. The *Epistle to Olympiodorus*, for its part, was used at the iconoclast councils of 754 and 815, as well as at the iconodule council of 787. It dealt with the question of appropriate church decoration, an issue supposedly brought up by Olympiodorus when he wanted to build a new church in honor of the martyrs, which he intended to adorn with many crosses, animals and hunting scenes. Nilus' response to the eparch's proposal comes in two radically different versions, which means that at least one of the opposing parties of the iconoclast controversy was tampering with the patristic evidence. In the iconodule version Nilus calls the eparch's plan infantile and asserts that it would be,

> the mark of a firm and manly mind to represent a single cross in the sanctuary, i.e. at the east of the most-holy church, for it is by virtue of the one salutary cross that humankind is being saved, and hope is being preached everywhere to the hopeless; and to fill the holy church on both sides with pictures of the Old and the New Testaments.[5]

The iconoclast version, however, does not contain these final words and says instead:

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[3] The authenticity of the letters is the subject of debate (see Cameron, 'The authenticity of the letters'; Thümmel, 'Neilos von Ankyra über die Bilder'), but scholars do generally agree that the author of these letters has to be distinguished from the author of the *Narrations*, which describe a trip to Sinai and Arabia and which has been used as a source for Arabia before Islam; see 'Neilos of Ankyra' in Kazhdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2, p. 1450.

[4] Thümmel, 'Neilos von Ankyra über die Bilder'; Cameron, 'A quotation from S. Nilus'.

[5] Nilus of Sinai, 'Olympiodoro Eparcho', p. 577 (t), here quoted from Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 33 (tr).

> In the sanctuary, according to the ordinances of the ecclesiastical traditions, it is sufficient to install the cross through which all of mankind has been saved and to whitewash the rest of the church.[6]

There were similar proof texts which the iconoclasts used in their propaganda, indicating that during the iconoclast age the cult of the cross was intensified in Byzantium.[7] In many ways the cross appeared to have become the alternative to, if not the competitor of, icons.[8]

It was claimed at the time that the version of Nilus' letter in which he proposed to place a single cross in the church was a forgery. As Gero rightly argued, the question of which of the two versions of Nilus' letter to Olympiodorus is authentic is hardly relevant for determining whether the *Legend* echoes this letter or the ideas espoused in it. More important, by far, is the actual discussion of the idea in early ninth-century Byzantium, because it is here that a possible connection with Baḥīrā's alleged 'iconoclastic' actions can be investigated. Gero tentatively proposes two possible connections between the *Legend* and Byzantine iconoclasm. On the one hand, it is possible that the *Legend* is directly dependent on this alleged patristic testimonium; or, on the other, perhaps it drew inspiration from Byzantine iconoclastic views in general.

Beginning with the first hypothesis, it is possible that the redactor of the *Legend* knew of Nilus' letter specifically, but this remains speculative. The *Legend* does not go into great detail about the monk's supposed attitude to the cross and does not allude to sources of inspiration in regard to this subject.[9] Whether this letter also existed in Syriac is as yet unknown, but the redactor of the *Legend* could possibly have known it

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[6] Hennephof, *Textus byzantinos ad iconomachiam pertinentes*, p. 84 (t) and Alexander, 'the Iconoclast Council of St. Sophia', p. 63 (t).

[7] For example the *Letter of Epiphanius of Salamis to Emperor Theodosius I* (wr. b. 395), in which he calls for the whitewashing of frescoes and the exclusive veneration of the cross, 'for our fathers delineated nothing except the salutary sign of Christ both on their doors and everywhere else'; Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 42 (tr), Ostrogorsky, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites*, p. 72 (t). See in general Thümmel, 'Die bilderfeindlichen Schriften'.

[8] The replacement of church decorations and icons by crosses, which is attested by material and textual findings, was a conscious attempt of the iconoclast emperors to promote the cult of the cross as an imperial symbol of victory, according to John Moorhead, 'Iconoclasm, the Cross and the Imperial Image', *Byzantion* 55 (1985) pp. 165–179. See also: Millet, 'Les iconoclastes et la croix'.

[9] A1 is the only recension in which the monk claims to have 'proofs en testimonies' for his view, without however mentioning any {5}.

in Greek.[10] It is improbable, however, that Nilus' idea could have been sufficiently known within the Syriac-speaking audience that it would jump to mind as an authoritative view, without there being an explicit reference to it.

The suggestion that there is a connection between the monk's alleged actions and Byzantine iconoclastic ideas in general is doubtful. Upon close inspection, the resemblance between Byzantine iconoclast attitudes to the cross and that of the monk in the *Legend* is minimal. In contrast to Baḥīrā, who wanted simply to reduce the number of crosses to one, Iconoclasts sought to enhance the cult of the cross at the expense of images. In the *Legend* images do not receive attention at all. Hence comparisons with Byzantine iconoclasm seem to be of only limited value for answering the question why the cult of the cross is addressed in the *Legend*.

To pursue the question further it will be helpful to look at the context 'closer to home', in the world of Near Eastern Christians living under Islamic rule. The cult of the cross was, in fact, one of the pressing issues on the agenda of Muslim-Christian confrontation in this world.[11] Extensive research has demonstrated that the attack of Islam on the cult of the cross was much more intense and widespread than the attack on images. The reluctance of Muslims to depict living beings has received disproportionate attention in modern scholarship, because of the ongoing focus on the question of Islamic influence on Byzantine iconoclasm.[12] The alleged 'iconoclastic' edict of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd II (r. 720–724) has been investigated and debated extensively,[13] mainly because it preceded the first official Byzantine wave of iconoclasm under Leo III (beginning in 726) by just a couple of years—a fact which the iconodules at the time already declared too much of

[10] There are many different works surviving in Syriac and Arabic which are attributed to Nilus. A translation of this particular letter has, however, not been discovered. In principle, the letter may eventually be found among the manuscripts which feature Nilus' works but have not been explored yet; see: Baumstark, *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur*, p. 91; Bettioli, *Gli scritti siriaci di Nilo*; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, p. 399.

[11] Gero also believed that the primary impetus to address the issue comes from the Muslim attack on the cult of the cross.

[12] For the relevant literature see King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine', p. 267, n. 1.

[13] Among others: Vasiliev, 'The iconoclast edict of the Caliph Yazid II'; Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the reign of Leo III*, pp. 59–84, 199–205; Speck, 'Was für Bilder eigentlich?'.

a coincidence.[14] A common problem with the excessive attention to Yazīd's policy is that it is often tacitly extrapolated and erroneously taken to be representative of the general attitude of Muslim rulers.[15] What several scholars have already shown is that, if one puts aside the case of Yazīd, a different picture emerges from the sources: the early program of Islamization of the Near East targeted the cult of the cross much more persistently than Christian images.[16] This may have partly to do with the fact that the Syriac churches were as such relatively aniconic and therefore also less of a target.[17] Furthermore, the cross was ideologically much more plainly objectionable to Muslims. To them the cult of the cross represented worship of a created thing, just as the veneration of images did. But there were many other significant grounds on which it was rejected. The cross was the Christian symbol *par excellence*, and it was ubiquitous in the Christian landscape, prominently visible on buildings and coins, during processions, on clothes, as tattoos etc. To Christians it constituted the memory of Christ's death, but Muslims disbelieved that the crucifixion had taken place and considered the idea an affront. And more than anything else, the cross was the perennial symbol of Christianity's triumph over its enemies. The Byzantine emperors had exploited its symbolism thoroughly, still on the eve of the Muslim conquests, when, at the end of the war with the Sassanians, they had recovered the 'True Cross' from Persian hands and restored it to Jerusalem.[18]

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[14] See for example the chronicler Theophanes who calls Leo 'Saracen-minded' and claims that he was influenced by a Syrian convert to Islam called Beser; De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1, pp. 402, 405 (t); Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, pp. 555, 559–560 (tr). In modern scholarship the idea of Islamic influence reappears (see for example Crone, 'Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm') but voices skeptical about this connection currently dominate the debate. For a survey of the different opinions: Schreiner, 'Der Byzantinische Bilderstreit'.

[15] Van Reenen, 'The *Bilderverbot*, a new survey', p. 70, n. 71.

[16] King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine', pp. 268–270. This is not to say that apart from the period of Yazīd there was no anti-Christian polemic about images. Theodore Abū Qurra's treatise in defense of the veneration of icons is clearly a response to Muslim polemic, not to Byzantine iconoclasm. A number of other Christian Arabic as well as Syriac texts deal with Muslim mockery of icons. See Griffith, 'Images, Islam and Christian Icons'.

[17] Mundell, 'Monophysite Church Decoration' (dealing also with East-Syrian churches); King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm, and the Declaration of Doctrine', pp. 272–273.

[18] Most probably in the year 630. See the note on the likely date in Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, pp. 459–460. For a discussion of its ideological importance, see: J.W. Drijvers, 'Heraclius and the *Restitutio Crucis*'.

Not surprisingly then, Muslim attempts to diminish the visibility of the cross in the public sphere already began during the early days of Islam. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem during the very first years of Muslim rule, already bemoans the 'Saracen' mockery of the cross.[19] There are accounts of 'Umar I removing the cross of a church on the Mount of Olives, too.[20] Although the removal policies were not as extensive as some of the sources suggest,[21] Byzantine coins have survived from which the cross has been partly removed.[22] Rules were also established in the *dhimma* regulations that restricted the public display of the cross, specifying, for example, that the cross could only be paraded once a year.[23] Another forceful and highly symbolic example of the Muslim attack on the cross comes in the form of apocalyptic ḥadīth, which said that Christ will come to break crosses at the end of time.[24]

This very tangible anti-Christian propaganda challenged the Christians in Islamic lands to defend their attachment to the cult of the cross. They argued that it was not the physical object itself that was being worshiped, and they tried to explain how a symbol of death could be a symbol of life. New forms of apologetics were created and old ones were unearthed with the aim of explaining the paradox of the crucifixion and securing the positive symbolic value of the cross.[25]

But how does the cross-breaking in the *Legend* fit in with this? A close reading of the different recensions within the framework of the

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[19] Sophronius refers to this mockery in his sermon on Holy Baptism, written in 636 or 637, which ends with a long lament on the 'Saracen' attacks, which reflects the immediate Christian soul-searching after the Muslim victories. See Kaegi, *Byzantium and Early Muslim Conquests*, p. 210 (tr).

[20] The event is narrated in several Christian sources, such as Theophanes and the *Chronicle of Seert*; Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 476; Scher, 'Chronique Nestorienne', part 4, p. 624. The story has some fantastic overtones.

[21] Schick has shown that not only old crosses have often been spared Muslim attacks, but that there are also examples from early Islamic Palestine of crosses being produced and displayed in public places, such as graveyards, the exterior of churches and, in one case, a bathhouse; Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine*, pp. 164–166.

[22] See the examples in Kaegi, *Byzantium and Early Muslim Conquests*, p. 209. After having recycled Byzantine coins for some time, the Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik introduced an-iconic coins.

[23] Sources containing such regulations, including restrictions upon the display of the cross, are known from the ninth century, but they contain elaborations of conquest treaties. See below: pp. 113–114.

[24] See for example Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-fitan*, p. 388 (nr. 1334) and 391 (nr. 1335).

[25] For the Melkite apologetics in specific, see Swanson, 'The Cross of Christ', and see further below.

*Legend*'s apologetic enterprise as a whole will make us understand why Baḥīrā's alleged campaign against the abundant display of the cross is also an attempt to defend its cult. It is emphasized in the texts that the monk preached that excessive crosses in churches and houses should be removed 'not because he hated the cross' but because 'he honored the cross more than all people'. He held that because Christ was crucified on only one cross, likewise people should venerate only the one cross. In other words, he is depicted as approaching the veneration of the cross in a more profound manner than his fellow believers. One of the recensions, A2, suggests that the monk's inspiration came from Sinai, during the opening scene of his apocalyptic revelations ({5}, {3.7}), when he had a glorious vision of the one and only redeeming cross 'seven times brighter than the light of the sun'. Likewise, the synoptic recensions describe how his vision of the future is sealed off with the final triumph of the cross at the end of times ({3.23}, {17.117}). Several other elements in the texts are meant to show the potency of the cross and the monk's belief in it. By means of the sign of the cross he is able to exorcize demons ({10.7}) and heal and convert a boy in the desert ({10.2}). When he predicts the future to Muḥammad, he says that despite the great success of their political victories, his followers will fail to conquer the Byzantine Empire because of its protection by the invincible cross ({15.4}). A2 quotes the Qur'an several times to highlight the reality of Christ's crucifixion ({16.17}, {16.19}). These and other passages in the *Legend* not only underscore Baḥīrā's attachment to the cross, they also function as a sweeping lesson about its symbolism.

Why is the reader made to believe then that the monk wanted to have crosses removed? And how is one to reconcile this position in turn with the view that 'he honored the cross more than all people'? Was the story of broken crosses invented to suggest to Christians that they had to de-emphasize the cult? Perhaps, as Gero put it, they sought to strike,

> a compromise which would not infringe on the unnegotiable principle of the reality of the crucifixion, but would result, in a scaling down, a reduction of the traditional cult of the cross, of its public display, as a political concession in the face of the rigidly negative Muslim attitude.[26]

Gero is certainly right in arguing that we must read the story in the light of this Muslim attitude. However, the apologetic mechanisms

[26] Gero, 'The legend of the monk Baḥīrā', p. 57.

of the *Legend* as a whole reveal that the purpose of the text is also somewhat different.

In truth, the *Legend* is devoted to explaining all aspects of Islam from a Christian perspective. This is done by showing doctrinal and scriptural similarities and simultaneously presenting pseudo-historical events that connect early Islam with Christianity. Importantly, the one form of demonstration mutually reinforced the other, giving the notion of common ground between the religions credibility. Within this apologetic enterprise the most challenging task was to explain away the aspects of Islam that appear at face value as diametrically opposed to Christian doctrine and hostile to the Christian community. A good example of a polemical challenge of this kind was the *Letter of Hārūn al-Rashīd to Constantine VI*, which asked those who challenged Muḥammad's prophethood: if the Prophet had a Christian teacher, then why did he not call his people to Christianity?[27] This is a question that the *Legend* attempts to answer by means of a set of interlocking propositions. Wherever Islam plainly diverges from its Christian 'origin', this divergence is explained away through a number of tortuous apologetic strategies, which in effect over-emphasize minor Muslim recognitions of Christian beliefs and undermine anti-Christian attitudes by ascribing them to Muslim ignorance about the rationale behind their own rituals and doctrines. With the issue of the cross the formula appears to be as follows: the monk who laid the foundations for Islam breaks crosses as a sign of honor to this symbol. Hence, if Muslims break crosses, and with them Christ at the end of time,[28] they likewise must do this out of honor for the cross, even though they may not know it or admit it. In this way one is led to believe that, in the real world, the imposition of rules that restrict the display of crosses does not necessarily stem from a negative judgment about them. This, then, means that it ought not to be seen as a sign of humiliation.

Although this idea is not immediately obvious, one can find a clear parallel of this apologetic mechanism in the section of the *Legend* where Muḥammad grants protection to Christians in his future empire, *immediately after* he has learnt who Christ is. Here, too, the fact that Christians are subjected to restrictions in Muslim society is transformed into a sign of recognition of Christian truth.[29] In a similar way the *Legend*

[27] See below: p. 154.
[28] See above p. 92 and p. 100.
[29] See below: pp. 95–104.

responds to the reality of the scaling down of the cult of the cross rather than actively calling for it. The pressing question was how doctrinal superiority could remain convincing in the light of socio-political setbacks.

It is worth noting that WS adds one apologetic element to the question of the cross in its introduction to the *Legend*. Here it is said that the monk also rejected crosses made of materials other than wood, saying: 'it is not proper for us to worship a cross of stone, silver, gold, copper or of any other material except wood, lest the matter would resemble to us the idols which the pagan peoples, the idolaters, make' ({0}). As I have already mentioned above, the accusation of idolatry was one aspect of the Muslim denunciation of the cult of the cross, and for this reason several early Christian apologies vis-à-vis Islam have wanted to address this issue in particular. The West-Syrian apologist Abū Rā'iṭa (d.c. 835) makes clear how the cross can be distinguished from idols in his *Risāla fī ithbāt dīn al-Naṣrāniyya wa-ithbāt al-thālūth al-muqaddas*:

> As for our veneration of the cross, despite proscribing the worship of idols; well, my brother, we venerate it specifically because of its lowliness. This is a clear sign that we reject the worship of graven images and refuse to prostrate to idols, because if we had accepted the worship of those things, then we would not avert ourselves from the most precious images, made of valuable material, and we would not turn away from things made of gold, silver, emerald and sapphire. But, in fact, we do not turn in devotion to anything but to this inconsiderable figure (*shakl ḥaqīr*).[30]

Abū Rā'iṭa proceeds to call this inconsiderable figure his 'Qibla', the only Qibla through which one can be saved. The word he uses is the Muslim term for 'direction of prayer', alluding of course to the difference with Muslims, who have their Qibla facing Mecca. The author of the *Apology of al-Kindī* goes into the same issue, but he, on the other hand, thinks that making crosses with one's own hands and from a variety of materials is the ultimate proof that Christians do not worship the material from which the crosses are made:

> because if we worshiped the wood, like you suspect, we would not have taken any other kind of cross. However, we have some of wood, gold, silver, stone, and gems, and we inscribe and engrave them with our hands.

[30] Graf, *Die Schriften des Jacobiten Abū Rā'iṭa*, vol. 1, p. 153 (t), vol. 2, p. 186 (tr).

> That proves that we do not mean to venerate those materials from which the crosses are made, but rather he who is symbolized by the cross.[31]

Although these two defenders explained this aspect of their faith in radically different ways, their ultimate message was similar. Abū Rā'iṭa stresses that Christians turn away from precious materials, and the *Apology of al-Kindī* stresses that the variety of materials used shows that the material itself is not the object of worship. In both cases the urgency to justify this part of Christian worship was clearly there. This also impelled the redactor of WS to go into this matter in his preface to the *Legend*, and his defense concurs with the thoughts of Abū Rā'iṭa, who must have been his coreligionist.[32]

### *God's Word and His Spirit—Baḥīrā's Christology*

In Chapter Two it has already been mentioned that, just as in the Islamic tradition, Baḥīrā eventually meets Muḥammad in the desert. In the *Legend* the monk then proceeds to explain his faith to the youngster. After he has explained that he received his mysterious foreknowledge of Muḥammad's future power and prosperity from God, the boy begins to interrogate the monk on his religion. He asks a number of basic questions such as 'how do you know God?' and 'where does He live?'. The monk's replies amount to a rudimentary introduction to the Christian faith, which has aptly been called 'Muḥammad's catechism' ({14}). In all recensions the monk begins with the most basic tenet of his belief, namely that the One God in whom he believes is the Creator of the universe.

Muḥammad's responses display a mixture of fascination and disbelief. Some of them are traditional non-Christian objections to Christianity, which give Baḥīrā the occasion to summarize and defend his faith in response to those objections. The ensuing dialogue forms an example of interreligious *erotapokriseis*, a conventional form of Christian apologetics, which is presented here in the fictional setting of the earliest days of the genesis of the rival faith.[33] For example the ques-

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[31] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 127–128; Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, p. 128 (tr).

[32] That is: assuming that the introduction to WS, which is unique to that recension, is the product of a redaction process within the West-Syrian community. There is no indication that this recension ever circulated in another community.

[33] For the genre and its importance in early Christian literature see Volgers and

tion 'Why do you worship a crucified man?' ({14.22}) is nothing more than an occasion for the monk to teach Muḥammad about Christ's resurrection, the redemption of humankind, and the resurrection of all people at the End of Times. Muḥammad's supposed initial incredulity is stilled by Baḥīrā's answers and eventually the discussion ends with Muḥammad's vow to do anything Baḥīrā may desire. Baḥīrā responds by requesting him to spare monks and leave them in peace.[34]

Because the *Legend* circulated in different confessional milieus, it is important to take a look at the instances in the discussion between Baḥīrā and Muḥammad in which Christology is discussed. We may try to analyze how the Christological expressions were altered during the transition from one confessional milieu to the next and what the individual expressions tell us about the way in which the redactors wanted to depict Muḥammad's instruction. In the case of the two Syriac recensions, there is no doubt that they belong to the East and West-Syrian communities, since this can be easily determined on the basis of their provenance and script. In the case of the two Arabic recensions, a closer look is needed to determine in which milieu these texts were produced. Before going into this, I will first discuss the Syriac recensions.

Both of them give as the first answer to Muḥammad's question 'who is Christ?' the reply 'Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit', in accordance with the Qur'an (Q 4:171, quoted below). When Muḥammad subsequently asks: 'is Christ God or man?', the contents begin to diverge and one can recognize doctrinal differences between the recensions.

In WS Baḥīrā explains that Christ is the Word, and he tells Muḥammad about the Virgin birth in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa 7:14, as interpreted in Matt 1:23):

> Christ is the Word. The Word of God the Father was sent from God and descended and dwelt in the womb of the Holy Virgin Mary. She conceived and gave birth without intercourse, as the prophet Isaiah had prophesied: "Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son and his name will be Emmanuel, which is explained as 'God is with us'."

When Muḥammad asks how a virgin can conceive without intercourse, Baḥīrā explains that:

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Zamagni, *Erotapokriseis*, especially the contribution by Ter Haar Romeny, 'Question-and-Answer Collections' for its popularity in the Syriac world (pp. 145–163).

[34] For the significance of this, see below: Ch 4, pp. 120–121.

> the Word of God descended from heaven and put on a body (*lebšat pagrā*) from the Virgin and Christ was born from her according to the flesh, *being God in hypostasis (qnōmā'īt) and nature (kyānā'īt)*.

The idiom 'put on a body' in relation to the Incarnation was rejected in Alexandrian theology. Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) regarded it as an undermining of the unity between the human and the divine in Christ and vehemently rejected the expression, which is used in the Peshitta in Heb 5:7. He blamed it on the influence of Nestorius:

> who cast the body onto the Word, like a garment on anyone's body, and like purple [robes] on the bodies of the emperors,—so that another beside him might be thought of, in the same way that every garment is something apart from the person who wears it.[35]

One could therefore get the impression that the redactor of this recension has tried to portray the monk as a teacher of heterodox views; as if he is putting 'Nestorian' ideas into Baḥīrā's mouth. However, on two specific grounds it can be determined that this is unlikely to be the case. First of all, the term 'put on a body' is used in Miaphysite texts, for example by Dionysius bar Ṣalībī.[36] More importantly, the continuation of Baḥīrā's explanation confirms that he is made to present a view that is orthodox to the West-Syrian readers: 'Christ was born from her according to the flesh, being *God in hypostasis and nature*'. This is recognizable Miaphysite Christology, which stresses the Divine nature of Christ and speaks of one nature and one hypostasis.

Looking at ES, we find again the Word clothing himself in flesh: 'the Word clothed himself with a body from the Virgin, and she gave birth to a son without intercourse and God came to be in a human being'. In this explanation one can recognize the 'Nestorian' views of the redactor, who fully in line with the doctrine of the distinct natures in Christ proceeds to speak of 'God in a human being'.

The Christological passage of A1 also starts out with the statement that Christ is the 'Word of God and His Spirit'. When Muḥammad

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[35] From his prologue to the Gospel of John: see, Faultless, 'The Two Recensions of the Prologue', p. 191, who quotes the paragraph from an unpublished translation by Sebastian Brock. The original text can be found in: De Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, vol. 1, p. 53. See also: Brock, 'Clothing metaphors', p. 18, p. 31.

[36] Ms Mingana Syr 89, fol. 53a. See also the examples given by Landron, *Attitudes Nestoriennes*, p. 197, and the *Vita* of tenth-century Coptic Patriarch Abraham: Leroy, 'Histoire d'Abraham le Syrien', p. 35. In addition it can be noted that many terms related to 'veiling' were used in Miaphysite texts to refer to the Incarnation. For this, see below: Ch. 5, pp. 142–143.

asks whether Christ is God or man, Baḥīrā responds that 'Christ is God and man'. After that he paraphrases the Annunciation of Luke 1:35, claiming that 'the Spirit of God descended from heaven and clothed itself with a body'. Similarly he says he worships Christ 'who is the Word of God and His Spirit, incarnate from the Virgin Mary'. Before discussing this passage in more detail I will first summarize the ideas expressed in A2.

A2 has a very different arrangement of the discussion about religion. Rather than elucidating the doctrines step by step Baḥīrā immediately presents Muḥammad with a description of the Trinity and the Unity of God, telling him that he believes in:

> God, the Eternal, the Living, Who does not die, the Holy One Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God Sebaoth, the Creator of everything, who lives and gives life with His Spirit, Three in hypostasis, One in substance.

Muḥammad immediately requests a simplified version of this creed, because he foresees that his people will not grasp it. Baḥīrā then tells him that the essential aspect of it is the belief in the Word of God:

> The ultimate object of worship is the creating eternal Word of God, one in substance with the Father and the glorious Holy Spirit, who has come down from heaven and became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and from the virgin Mary and who has worked miracles and ascended to the heavens and who will come again to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end and no cessation.

This explanation echoes the part of the Nicene Creed that deals with Christ. The 'reverberating' elements are: 'one in substance with the Father', 'who has come down from heaven and became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and from the virgin Mary', and 'who will come again to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end'.

There are some interesting differences, however. First of all, the 'Son of God' is designated 'Word of God', which according to the monk is the ultimate object of worship. I am inclined to believe that the Son has been replaced here in order to avoid Muslim objections, as well as the discussion of how he was conceived. Secondly, one can see that there is no reference to the part of the creed which says that he 'was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried'. This omission may hint at a Miaphysite authorship; the divine in Christ is stressed, and his humanity is not at all traceable in the monk's words. Elsewhere, when the monk describes how he wrote the verse Q 4:157 about the 'illusory' crucifixion of Christ, he

explains: 'With this I mean that Christ did not die in the substance of his divine nature but rather in the substance of his human nature'. This, on the other hand, seems to go against the Miaphysite idea of one substance in Christ, but in fact, the same explanation is given to this verse by a Coptic author, so presumably this can refer to the two substances which became one at the Incarnation.[37] There is, however, no truly decisive statement that clearly betrays the confessional milieu of the redactor. In other passages in this recension there are some more general Trinitarian statements, which emphasize the existence and equality of the three *personae* of the Godhead. This is to be found in Baḥīrā's reference to Christ's baptism, when there was 'the testimony of the two hypostases to the one hypostasis through the uniformity of the oneness of the substance, the Eternal, One, Living, Rational God.' In one place we find the same expression as in the other recensions, namely that Christ is 'the Word of God and His Spirit'.

This deserves some further consideration. It is worth remarking that this expression 'God's Word and His Spirit' is to be found in every recension. As already noted above, this is nothing but the language of the Qur'an. The key verse is Q 4:171, which calls Christ 'the apostle of God and His Word that he committed to Mary and a Spirit from Him'. In order to understand the role of this Qur'anic phraseology in the different recensions it is useful to look at other Eastern Christian texts in which it is used. It has been documented that some of the earliest Christian texts dealing with Islam already show an awareness of this Qur'anic understanding of Christ. In one of the oldest extant Christian references to Islam, the West-Syrian Church Father Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) dwells on the Islamic view of Christ and comments on how it conflicts with Christian doctrine. In his *Letter on the Genealogy of the Virgin*, written in the early eighth century, he writes the following about Muslims:

> They say to all times that Jesus son of Mary is in truth the Messiah and they call him the Word of God, as do the Holy Scriptures. They also add, in their ignorance, that he is the Spirit of God, for they are not able to distinguish between the Word and the Spirit, just as they do not assent to call the Messiah God or Son of God.[38]

[37] Samir, 'La réponse d'al-Ṣafī', pp. 318–319 (t).

[38] Nau, 'Lettre de Jacques d'Edesse', p. 519 (t), p. 523 (tr); the English translation in the above is from Hoyland, 'Jacob of Edessa on Islam', p. 156.

The author's comment is not surprising, for Christians would not claim that Christ *is* the Holy Spirit. Jacob's *Letter on the Genealogy of the Virgin* is nonetheless the only Eastern Christian text in which the Qur'anic description of Jesus as the Spirit is expressly designated as misunderstood. Most Christian apologists chose *not* to focus on the awkwardness of this point, but rather to use Q 4:171 to their own advantage and to exploit the pair 'God's Word and His Spirit' in their apologetics vis-à-vis Islam as proof of the existence of the three eternal hypostases of the Godhead. They did this in different ways. In a number of early apologetic writings, authors confront Muslims with these Qur'anic words in order to fend off challenges to their belief in the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ. The Greek apologetic text entitled *Disputation of a Saracen and a Christian* urges Christians to ask Muslims whether the 'Word of God and His Spirit' are uncreated or created.[39] If answering 'created', the Muslim will be silenced by the question whether God was without Word and Spirit before He created them.[40] Similarly, in the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē*, a monk forces his interlocutor to make a choice, as he says: 'either you remove "the Word of God and His Spirit" or you confess him [i.e. Jesus Christ] straightforwardly as 'Son of God'.'[41]

There are also numerous texts in which support for the existence of the Trinity is drawn from the Qur'an in a less confrontational manner. They echo its language without going into the question of the exact relationship between the different members of the Trinity. The eighth-century apology vis-à-vis Islam from Sinai, *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-Wāḥid*, mentions '*kalimatuhu wa-rūḥuh*' time and again. One can notice how in such texts 'God and His Word and His Spirit' is a convenient way of referring to the Trinity. A clear example is a phrase such as 'Verily he who believeth not in God and His Word and His Spirit, one God, hath not kept the faith in God'.[42]

Finally, there are instances where 'God's Word and His Spirit' definitely apply to the person of Christ. In the oldest surviving fragments of Christian Arabic apologetic literature, it is said that the 'Merciful fathered His Word and His Spirit'.[43] *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-Wāḥid* has an

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[39] The authorship of this text is disputed and although Sahas published it as a work of John of Damascus, it is more likely to be a work of Theodore Abū Qurra.

[40] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 148–149 (ttr).

[41] MS Diyarbakir 95, fol. 4b.

[42] Dunlop Gibson, 'An Arabic Version', p. 33 (tr), p. 104 (t).

[43] Graf, 'Christlich-arabische Texte', pp. 12–13 (ttr).

ingenious way of using the Qur'an to prove that Christ is the Creator rather than a created being:

> If God—blessed be His name!—established the heavens and the earth by His Word, and gave life to the angels by His Spirit, the Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit—as ye bear witness—and do not reproach us when we believe in Christ, the God of God; He created the heavens and the earth, and by Him He gave life to the angels and to all people.[44]

The roundabout suggestion here is that since the creative aspects of both God's Word and God's Spirit are demonstrable from the Qur'an, its designation of Christ as 'Word of God and His Spirit' is correct, because it is a way of saying that Christ is the Creator. In other words, the Qur'anic understanding of Christ is approved of because, even if it is unfamiliar, it does confirm the truth of Christian beliefs.

Based on what has been discussed above, it has been established that in each of the various recensions of the *Legend* the monk teaches this Qur'anic Christology. Furthermore, it seems to be the case that his elucidation is consistent with the Christology of the respective communities. If this is so, then it may seem right to conclude that the *Legend* tries to suggest that the Qur'anic Christology is ultimately acceptable to Christians. In other words, there is no insinuation that the monk taught something heterodox, or to be more concrete, it may be implied that the words used in the Qur'an can only derive from Christian teachings. In this respect it is worth looking once more at two of the early Christian apologetic texts already mentioned, given their claim that the Qur'anic Christology is a 'condensation' of the Biblical passage of the Annunciation. In the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē*, the Muslim mentions that he professes ʿĪsā son of Maryam as 'God's Word and His Spirit', in accordance with the words of Muḥammad. The monk's response is as follows:

> Muḥammad received this from Luke, as the angel Gabriel announced and proclaimed to the blessed Mary 'Hail, highly favored, the Lord is with you, blessed you are among women. The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of the Highest.' Now reflect on your word and realize what you heard from Muḥammad, because you testify that he proclaimed the Word of God and His Spirit.[45]

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[44] Dunlop Gibson, 'An Arabic Version', p. 23 (tr), p. 95 (t).
[45] MS Diyarbakir 95, fol. 4b, combining Luke 1: 28 and Luke 1: 35.

A similar point is made in the *Disputation of a Saracen and a Christian*:

> Your scripture says that God cleansed the Virgin Mary above all other women and the Spirit of God and the Word descended into her; and my Gospel says, 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'. Here is one voice in both statements and one meaning.[46]

It is clear that these authors considered the Annunciation in Luke to be the basis of the Qur'anic description of Christ. It seems somewhat ironic that the Qur'an is more explicit in referring to Christ as 'the Word' than the Biblical verse. Reinink, however, has drawn attention to the fact that the Christian apologists in question appeal to the exegetical tradition in which 'the power of the Most High' is regarded as the Word. This interpretation is already to be found with Ephrem the Syrian and has been adopted by later Syriac and Greek writers.[47]

It is to be assumed that a similar line of thought hides behind the *Legend*, in the sense that the 'catechetical passages' are meant to show that the Qur'anic references to Christ as God's Word and Spirit can only be an echo of something a Christian could say, even if it has turned out to be a slightly flawed belief in Islam. For apologetic purposes the stress is on the similarities between Islam and Christianity rather than on the differences; the redactors settle for a description of Christ which is neither Christian, nor Islamic. To a Christian, as we have already seen with Jacob of Edessa, the members the Trinity are confused in the Qur'an, and to a Muslim these words do not mean that Christ is divine. And yet the *Legend*, as well as the two other examples given above, suggest that this is what Christians and Muslims both believe, and that it comes down to the same thing. As the author of the *Disputation of a Saracen and a Christian* put it, it is 'one voice'.

In A1 this thought is stretched surprisingly far. There is a clear indication that this is a Melkite recension, which is to be found in Baḥīrā's explanation of Christ's death:

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[46] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 150–151 (ttr). The author also cited Luke 1:35. What he says about the Qur'an is based on Q 3:42, Q 19:17, Q 66:12, Q 3:45 and Q 4:171.

[47] Reinink discusses the relevance of Ephrem's exegesis of Luke 1:35 for the apologetic argument in question in: 'Bible and Qur'ān' (forthcoming).

> The Jews who were in Jerusalem crucified him at the hands of a man who was ruler over them, before the reign of the Greeks'. M[uḥammad] said to him: 'who are the Greeks?' And Baḥīrā said to him: 'they are the 'Rūm'.'

There is no doubt that the redactor has wanted to avoid saying that Christ was crucified 'at the hands of a Roman ruler', because this would sound in Arabic as if it had been a Byzantine at whose hands Christ was killed. Such a remark is to be expected first and foremost from a Melkite, who would want to spare his co-religionists, the Byzantines, from such a suggestion. In addition, Baḥīrā's assertion that Christ is 'God and man' is closest of all recensions to the Chalcedonian tradition. However, after this explanation of who Christ is, the monk's sayings take a radical turn, when he claims that the Spirit became incarnate. He states: 'the Spirit of God descended from heaven and clothed itself with a body (*labisa jasadan*)'. If one compares the text with ES one could perhaps think that in the latter phrase A1 has mistakenly omitted 'the Word'. However, there are two similar explanations in the same passage: 'that Spirit and the Word abided (*makatha*) in that man born from the Virgin Mary' and 'Christ, him do I serve and him do I worship, because he is the Word of God and His Spirit, incarnate (*mutajassida*) from the Virgin Mary'. Obviously the redactor of A1 has reinterpreted the Christology of the monk 'towards' the Qurʾan. His words call to mind Q 19:17, which states: Then We sent unto her Our Spirit that presented himself to her a man without fault'. Nevertheless, just as in the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē*, the doctrine is associated with Luke 1:35, since the monk explains that Gabriel told Mary: ' "the Holy Spirit will overshadow you and the one born from you will be the Son of God" '.

In the end we may conclude that the 'synoptic' recensions apply the Christological doctrine which is acceptable to the redactor's own community, but that no attempt is made to explain in detail how the human and the Divine are united in Christ, and no allusions are made to the exclusive truth of one's own doctrine. The most important point is that their own Christological formulas are reconcilable with the way Christ is depicted in the Qurʾan. A2 also makes the connection between Christian doctrine and the Qurʾan, but it is even less committed to the explanation of the redactor's own confession.

It is my distinct impression that an attempt has been made to construct an apologetic story that appeals to all Christians, for which Christological statements had to be kept to a minimum; or, to put it differently, there was no need to go into more detail about it. This did not

mean that the redactors did not want to make minor changes when they received a text in which the monk was explaining the faith in a way that was unfamiliar or objectionable to them. In general it can also be noted in regard to Eastern Christian apologetics that both the texts and the ideas in them circulated freely between the communities; to this extent, there do not seem to have been any confessional boundaries. Some apologists even made efforts to show that the Christian communities were united, by producing treatises which explained that what appear to be differences between different Christian communities are in reality only superficial quibbles over words.[48]

### *Protection and recognition—Baḥīrā and Q 5:82*

Once Muḥammad has received his elementary training in Christianity, he offers to do for the monk whatever he may desire ({15}). In all recensions Baḥīrā then asks protection for his fellow Christians who will be subjected to the predestined rule of Muḥammad's followers. This issue ties in with the reports about agreements made during the early days of Islam about how the Muslim authorities should treat their Christian subjects and about how Christians should comport themselves in public. The latter could enjoy protection (*dhimma*) on condition that they obey a number of rules. These rules crystallized into what became known as the 'Pact of 'Umar'. In its literary form this document can be dated to the late ninth or early tenth century,[49] but its contents have their roots in the Islamic conquest treaties and the social conditions of the newly conquered peoples.[50] The Pact constituted a norm only; in real life the way Christians were treated by the Muslim authorities was

[48] For example: the early tenth-century treatise by 'Alī b. Dā'ūd al-Arfādī entitled *Kitāb ijtimā' al-imāna wa-mukhtaṣar al-diyāna* (Troupeau, 'Le Livre de l'Unanimité de la Foi'), the treatise on the accord of the Christians despite their difference in expression by Naẓīf ibn Yumn (wr. c. 1000) (Samir, 'Un traité du Cheikh') and the eighth chapter of the mid-thirteenth century Coptic work *Fuṣūl mukhtaṣara fī tathlīth al-ittiḥād* by al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl (Samir, 'L'accord des religions monothéistes'). See also Teule, 'It is not right to call ourselves orthodox' and Samir, 'Christian Arabic literature', pp. 451–452.

[49] Cohen, 'What was the Pact of 'Umar?'.

[50] Noth, 'Abgrenzungsprobleme zwischen Muslimen und Nicht-Muslime'. Useful studies of the *dhimma* regulations are Fattal, *Le Statut légal des non-Musulmans*, and Tritton, *The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects*. Although the rules were meant to be applied to all the 'People of the Book', from the content of the Pact it is clear that it reflects most prominently the relations between Muslims and Christians.

dependent on the circumstances of the time and could fluctuate considerably. The Pact, known in Arabic as *al-Shurūṭ al-ʿUmariyya* or *ʿAhd ʿUmar*, nevertheless functioned as a point of reference.

*Dhimmīs* have consistently rephrased the regulations in such a way as to make them suit their own interests. Numerous documents containing such 'shadow-*shurūṭ*' have been produced by Jews and Christians alike.[51] The Jewish communities in various parts of the Near East produced long texts with detailed regulations protecting their way of life, supposedly granted to them by the Prophet himself. One of these portrays Muḥammad's charter of protection to the Jewish community as an acknowledgment of the Jews' true monotheism and revealed scripture, and as a reward for their willingness to desecrate the Sabbath for his cause.[52] The Eastern Christian communities drew up similar documents. The monks of the West-Syrian monastery of Mar Gabriel in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, for example, described in detail how the Caliph ʿUmar I personally promised protection to Mar Gabriel, which included the right to sing during burials and to use the sounding-board, thus clearly inverting some of the rules of the Pact of ʿUmar as Muslims had it.[53] The East-Syrian community equally claimed to have acquired edicts of protection from the Muslim authorities. The *Chronicle of Seert*, an elaborate East-Syrian historical work that was probably written in the tenth century, mentions several episodes in which protection is being granted.[54] We read for example that there was a certain ascetical monk called Theodore of Kashkar who had deeply impressed the Caliph ʿUmar I. The ascetic stood forever upright and when the Caliph saw the swollen legs of the pious man he decided to grant his request for

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[51] In addition to the texts discussed here, see Graf, 'Apokryphe Schutzbriefe Muhammeds'; Cheikho, ''Uhūd nabī l-islām'.

[52] Ahroni, 'Some Yemenite Jewish Attitudes', contains this particular *Kitāb dhimmat al-nabī Muḥammad* from Yemen, as well as a discussion of the odd way in which it describes the Prophet's relation with the Jews. A similar but more primitive document was found in the Cairo Genizah; see Hirschfeld, 'The Arabic Portion of the Cairo Genizah', pp. 170–174. For a Samaritan account of how Muḥammad promised full protection to the Samaritans, see below pp. 200–201.

[53] Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fiche 1, p. lxxii. The supposed pact is presented in the *Vita* of Gabriel (d. 648) who was abbot of Qartmīn and bishop of Tur Abdin during the conquest period. A somewhat different version of his negotiations with the Caliph was already presented by Nau in his 'Un Colloque du Patriarch Jean', pp. 274–279.

[54] On the basis of comments and references in the text it has been determined that the work must have been produced between the years 912–1020, although it has been suggested that it contains a reference to a thirteenth-century ʿAbbasid Caliph as well. See the discussion in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 443–446.

tax exemption for priests.[55] In the same period the Catholicos Mar Sabrishoʿ obtained the tax exemption for 'those clothed in wool', i.e. ascetical monks, after healing two of the local governor's daughters.[56]

In each of these stories there is a sense that the edicts are a sign of the recognition of the community, both of its integrity and its beliefs. Muslim rulers are always presented as granting protection to the Christians as a token of approval and admiration. This is also the case in the *Legend*, where, as we have seen, Muḥammad offers his aid to Christians as a direct result of having become acquainted with their faith. This aspect of these texts needs to be contrasted with a similar *topos* in the Pact of ʿUmar. In each of its versions there is explicit mention of the fact that it was the Christians who *asked* for the agreement. Mark Cohen has drawn attention to this peculiar feature of Christians 'dictating their own disabilities'.[57] Given that the Pact, in its Islamic version, contains mostly restrictions upon Christian worship and customs, Cohen has tried to understand why Christians would be cast in the role of people requesting their own subordination. The grounds for this, he argues, could be the fact that the Pact does not include rules that can be traced back to the Prophet himself; that is, the rules reflect the circumstances only during the conquest of the Near East after his death. The introductory formula of the Christian 'petition' could, in other words, have been included to justify the implementation of laws that are not supported by the Qurʾan or the Sunna, and furthermore to strengthen the Muslim case to enforce them. ʿUmar, then, cannot be blamed for inventing policies of his own.[58] I would argue that this peculiar element of the texts can be further developed if one recognizes the intertextual tension between the two *topoi*. According to this scenario, Christians claimed that they were offered protection as a sign of recognition (even as they rewrote the rules themselves in such a way as to not

[55] Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, pp. 598–599 (ttr).

[56] Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, pp. 632–633 (ttr). This Mar Sabrishoʿ is also mentioned in the introduction to WS: see below, p. 315. Another text is which a healing miracle is the reason for lower taxation is the Arabic Vita of Timothy of Kākhushtā. In this case the protagonist heals the son of Hārūn al-Rashīd. The exemption is portrayed as a reconfirmation of a decree of the Prophet. See: Lamoreaux and Cairala, 'The Life of Timothy', pp. 504–509, 580–587 (ttr).

[57] Cohen, 'What was the Pact of ʿUmar?', p. 125. All of the regulations contained in the text of the various versions of the Pact are also phrases in the first person plural which represent the voice of the *Dhimmīs*: 'We shall not sell alcoholic beverages', 'We shall not teach our children the Qurʾan' etc.

[58] Cohen, 'What was the Pact of ʿUmar?', pp. 129–130.

look like restrictions), while Muslims suggested that they were doing a favor to Christians when they instituted these rules at their own request. The jurists who documented and elaborated the Pact of ʿUmar may have wanted to include the alleged requests to suggest that the Muslim authorities were not at all obliged to grant special treatment to Christians and that the Christian communities do not necessarily deserve to be protected. At face value, this interpretation may seem peculiar, because its underlying assumption is that the Christians were indeed granted something positive, even when a quick glance at the Pact of ʿUmar makes clear that this was not the case. Christians nonetheless presented the actual institution of these rules as a sign of recognition for the integrity of their community. Their argument appears to be that even if it restricts them socially, it remains a fact that it leaves the community otherwise intact and, thus, recognizes its right to exist. It is not hard to imagine that this kind of argument grew in direct response to calls for conversion. The 'petition formula' in the Pact of ʿUmar, for its part, may well be the counterpart to this propaganda, in the sense that it presents the settlement as an act of grace. Not only does the formula counteract the sense that the *dhimma* was founded on a positive judgment about Christianity, it also implies that the Christians knew that the alternative to it was conversion or persecution. To this extent the 'petition formula' serves to make the reality of the survival of non-Muslim communities fit into the Islamic program of total conquest and Islamization.

Let us look at some more examples. In the above discussion I have not yet addressed the most elaborate section on Muslim-Christian negotiations in the *Chronicle of Seert*, which is the most striking example of the apologetic twists given to the issue of *dhimma* and is also relevant in connection with our understanding of the discussion between Muḥammad and Baḥīrā in the *Legend*. This section is the chapter on the pact between the Prophet and the Christians of Najrān.[59] It begins with a clearly fictitious declaration of the Prophet as to why the Christians deserve to be protected forever. He praises the Christians profusely as supporters of his cause, and at the same time he condemns polytheists and Jews in sharp terms.[60] The piece that follows, the pact proper, is

[59] Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, pp. 601–618 (ttr).

[60] In the Jewish apocryphal *dhimma* text referred to in the above (p. 91, n. 52), it was also the alleged support for the Prophet's mission which made the Jews deserve their protection.

also certainly penned by Christians, but should not be dismissed as an absolute forgery, because it includes a list of obligations for Christians known also from the Pact of ʿUmar, and it also echoes some of the Prophet's demands and promises to the people of Najrān as contained in Muslim sources.[61] It is noteworthy that here, as well as in the *Legend* and many of the edicts written by Christians, the regulations are presented as going back to the founder of Islam himself rather than to one of his successors.

In the account about Najrān, just as in the other two accounts of negotiations with Muslim rulers contained in the *Chronicle of Seert*, the treaty stipulates that monks need not pay taxes. This question of tax exemption is an issue that appears in many of these apocryphal edicts. One of the recensions of the *Legend* addresses this issue too. In A2 Muḥammad's admiration for Baḥīrā's faith leads him to declare that in his future empire monks will be relieved from the tax burden {15.5}. There is definitely a historical reality behind this rule, as it can be inferred from historical and legal sources that monks were often excused from their fiscal duties. A number of scholars working on the history of Islamic taxation and the status of non-Muslim peoples in the Islamic world have investigated this issue, albeit not exhaustively.[62] Unfortunately the evidence is sketchy, which means that it is not certain whether this exemption was applied uniformly in the early days of Islam. It has nevertheless been noted that the exemption became the subject of controversy already in Umayyad times, when several gov-

[61] Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, p. 616 contains obligations similar to the Pact of ʿUmar, such as having to provide hospitality to Muslims for three days and not giving shelter to enemies of the Muslims; Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb and al-Balādhurī also include an agreement between the Prophet and the Christians of Najrān in their works; comparing their texts with the one of the *Chronicle of Seert* one finds in the same wording the pledge that there will be no Muslim interference in monastic and church affairs, while the supposed agreement in the *Chronicle of Seert*'s version that if one does not have the capacity to provide the Muslims with a garment one can instead pay its value in money (Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, p. 612 (ttr)) is in all likelihood a response to the stipulation by the Prophet that the community of Najrān must pay 2000 garments each year as contained in the Muslim sources concerned; Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb, *Kītāb al-kharāj*, pp. 157–160; Fagnan, *Abou Yousof Yaʿkoub*, pp. 108–110 (tr); al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, vol. 1, p. 76.

[62] Lökkegaard calls the sources contradictory and avoids an in-depth discussion (Lökkegaard, *Islamic Taxation*, p. 131). Similarly: Simonson, *Caliphal Taxation System*, pp. 98–99; Kallfelz only states in general terms that monks and hermits were exempted for a long time (Kallfelz, *Nichtmuslimische Untertanen*, p. 95); see also the reference in the note below.

ernors in Egypt began to levy taxes on monks in order to, among other things, deter citizens from entering monasteries for the purpose of escaping taxation.[63] In the late eighth century Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb (d. 798), student of Abū Ḥanīfa and qadi of Baghdad, dealt with the question in his *Kitāb al-kharāj*, which means that by that time the exemption was not a sure thing anymore in Iraq either, if it ever was.[64] He suggested that only poor monks should be exempted. Most *madhāhib* came to support an overall exemption, although the Shāfiʿīs disagreed.[65] Under the ʿAbbasids the decisions of the authorities, nevertheless, varied considerably.[66]

The mention of the tax exemption in the edicts forged by Christians therefore leaves us with several questions. Did the Christian authors of these edicts want to prescribe, once and for all, a policy which in reality did not exist in such clear-cut terms? Although the invention of rules and the forging of documents may hardly seem an effective way to influence the communities' legal and social status, it has to be kept in mind that every town negotiated the terms of its surrender individually during the conquests, which means that it must have been tempting to produce false evidence when, say, a hundred years later, an official came to town.[67] And indeed, there are known cases of *dhimmīs* bringing out their forged edicts and successfully chasing away the tax collectors from their doorsteps, stopping the demolition of their illegally built places of worship etc.[68] Or did the authors of the texts under discussion consider the rule a historical given, despite some variations in its application? The references in our texts to tax exemption for those most devoted to Christ would then be meant as another forceful symbol of Islam unintentionally revealing its historical and ideological closeness to Christianity. At least in the case of the *Legend* this is most

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[63] Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax*, pp. 78–86.

[64] Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb, *Kitāb al-kharāj*, pp. 253–254 (t); Fagnan, *Abou Yousof Yaʿkoub*, p. 188 (tr).

[65] Fattal, *Le Statut légal des non-Musulmans*, pp. 270–271.

[66] Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, vol. 3, pp. 364–367; Fattal, *Le Statut légal des non-Musulmans*, pp. 271–272; Zayyāt, 'al-Diyārāt al-Naṣrāniyya', pp. 401–405; Tritton, *The Caliphs and their non-Muslim subjects*, pp. 217–218.

[67] Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb's *Kitāb al-kharāj* is as such a witness to the diversity in practice and the need for homogenization of the policies.

[68] Graf, 'Apokryphe Schutzbriefe Muhammeds', p. 14; Ahroni, 'Some Yemenite Jewish Attitudes', p. 50 and n. 9. Steinschneider (*Polemische und Apologetische Literatur*, pp. 397–399) mentions an anti-Jewish tract by Aḥmad ibn al-Saʿātī (d. 1294) in which he attacks the Jews for having forged such documents.

probably the rationale behind the reference to the tax exemption, as the text does not purport to be an edict, nor is it meant for Muslim eyes.

Although only A2 brings up the tax status of monks, the 'synoptic' recensions address Islam's attitude to monks in this part of the *Legend* ({15}), albeit in more general terms. They weave the Qur'anic praise for monks and priests into the narrative about the contact between Muḥammad and Baḥīrā. In Q 5:82 Christians are called the 'nearest in affection to those who believe'. The verse explains this as follows: 'that is because there are priests among them and monks and because they are not proud'. A paraphrase of this verse is put into Baḥīrā's mouth as part of his request to Muḥammad for good treatment of his fellow believers ({15.2}).[69] The verse is often adduced in Christian Arabic apologetics, and its immediate apologetic appeal as a counterpoise to Muslim critique of Christians and their beliefs is evident. In order to distinguish themselves from other non-Muslims, with whom they did not like to be associated, Christian apologists were also keen to quote the verse together with its first half, which calls Jews and polytheists 'the strongest enemies of the believers'.[70] The verse is of course also highly suggestive of Muḥammad's acquaintance with monasticism per se. Furthermore, by drawing attention to this positive view on monks, the apologists try to silence the negative evaluations of monks and monasticism that can be found in the Qur'an and ḥadīth. The Qur'anic verses critical of monasticism are Q 9:34 and Q 57:26. In the former it is insinuated that monks live off other people's wealth, while the latter suggests that monasticism has been invented by mankind rather than prescribed by God.[71] There are also traditions about the Prophet

[69] A2 also includes the verse in the list of verses written by Baḥīrā in {16.2}; see: p. 463.

[70] See A2, p. 465, n. 52; Teule, 'Paul of Antioch's Attitude', pp. 91–92; Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 6, Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, p. 90 (tr). As already mentioned above, the same occurs in the *Chronicle of Seert*, which quotes the verse in its prelude to the Prophet's pact with the Christians of Najrān the verse features as well; the Prophet is depicted here as recounting the virtues of the Christians and contrasting them with the malicious attitude of the Jews; Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, pp. 604–605 (ttr).

[71] See: Sviri, '*Wa-rahbānīyatan ibtada'ūhā*' and McAuliffe, *Qur'anic Christians*, pp. 260–284. (There is also Beck, 'Das christliche Mönchtum im Koran', which consists of bizarre psychologizing interpretations of these verses.) Of course it was not under Islam that the monastic life was criticized for the first time. When Baḥīrā says that monks pray for everyone in the community {15.2}, he uses an old argument in defense of a lifestyle that also to some Christians seemed to represent idleness and unproductivity.

denouncing celibacy, such as those which al-Ṭabarī supplies as the background to the revelation of the words 'do not say make unlawful the good things that God has made lawful for you' (Q 5:87).[72]

In the *Legend* the allusion to Q 5:82 is made in the context of the Prophet's alleged promise of protection and therefore adds some more force to its apologetic appeal. If the Prophet indeed responded to Baḥīrā's positive words about monks and priest by promising to protect them forever, then the protection of monasteries that was witnessed in actual fact in Muslim society should surely be seen as a positive appraisal of monastic practice itself.[73] And the occasional attacks on monasteries by the Muslim population and rulers could be interpreted as un-Islamic and contrary to the will of the Prophet. But there is even more to this passage in the *Legend*. It ends with Baḥīrā promising Muḥammad that *if* he treats monks and other Christians well, he and his followers will be invincible ({15.3}). When the monk declares that the political success of Islam is in fact directly dependent on a proper treatment of monks and clergymen, the implication is that transgressors of this rule are undercutting the foundations of their own power. This is an ingenious way for a Christian apologist to make clear to his own community that its socio-political powerlessness and subjection should not be read as abandonment by God. His message, on the contrary, is that those who boast about having political might and religious truth are unknowingly on their way to being abandoned by

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See for example how Gregory the Great defends monasticism in an epistle to the Emperor Maurice, stressing that monks are soldiers of the Lord that can avert the end of times through their prayers; Barmby, *Selected Epistles of Gregory the Great*, pp. 140–141 (tr).

[72] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, part 7, vol 5, pp. 7–9.

[73] Two of the earliest Syriac authors to refer to Muslim rule already made mention of the fact that monasteries were spared from Muslim attacks. The East-Syrian John of Phenek, who wrote a world history entitled *Ktābā d-rēsh mellē* in the late 680s, mentioned in his last chapter that the new rulers, had received 'a special commandment from God concerning our monastic station to hold it in honour' (Mingana, *Sources Syriaques 1*, 146* (t), Brock, 'North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century', p. 61(tr)). His coreligionist Patriarch Ishoʿyabh III (d. 659) called the new rulers 'honourers of the priests and of the holy of our Lord and helpers of the churches and monasteries' and he used the favorable treatment of these churchmen as an argument for his flock to stick to the faith rather than to abandon it for Islam (Duval, *Išōʿyahb III Patriarcha liber epistularum*, vol. 1, p. 251 (t), vol. 2, p. 182 (tr).). As with the issue of tax exemption this positive side of Muslim-Christian interaction was actively kept in memory and adduced as the norm, while in reality the policy fluctuated and monasteries were at times raided (see: Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, vol. 3, pp. 311–325, pp. 361–378).

God. As in so many other instances in the *Legend*, this passage aims at disentangling Islam's political success from its claim to absolute religious supremacy. One sees the mutual reinforcement between this section and the apocalyptic parts of the *Legend*, which show in even much clearer terms that ultimately Muslim might and victory is not proof of divine support. In all cases the reader is led to believe that it is Christ who decides after all how long the Muslims will rule.

### *The Physics of Heaven*

Muḥammad brings up a question in his conversation with the monk that alludes to an important issue of contention in interreligious debate between Christians and Muslims: the carnality of the Qur'anic paradise. While talking with Baḥīra, Muḥammad anticipates the curious and critical questions of his future followers and therefore introduces several of his questions with 'what if they say to me…?' ({16.3–16.7}. The monk's answers are straightforward. To the question what there is to be found in heaven, for example, he tells Muḥammad that the best food and drinks will be provided there to the believers. Muḥammad then immediately foresees the next question of his audience: if there is food and drink won't there also the need to relieve oneself? ({16.6}).

It is well-known that the physical conception of heaven in Islam was a weapon in the hands of Christians, whose critical questions regarding the pleasurable reward in the hereafter have plagued Muslims continuously.[74] The Qur'anic promise of delicious nourishment and sexual intercourse rather than pure spiritual bliss was considered offensive and false, and the Bible was brought out to show that 'the Kingdom of God consists not of food and drink but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom 14:17). The Emperor Leo in his *Letter to 'Umar II* quotes this verse, together with Christ's declaration that 'at the resurrection men will not marry women nor women men, but they shall be as the angels' (Matt 22:30).[75]

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[74] Tor Andrae has tried to show that many of the Qur'anic ideas about the joys of paradise are dependent on Ephrem the Syrian; seeing the irony that Christians have always rejected its physical aspects, he suggests that 'the Goddess of history must have laughed about this'; Andrae, *Les origines de l'Islam*, p. 155.

[75] Jeffery, 'Ghevond's text', p. 329 (tr). Similarly with the Coptic author Severus ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 987); see: Ebied and Young, *The Lamp of the Intellect*, vol. 1, p. 15 (t), vol. 2, p. 14 (tr).

The Caliph had a ready response to these criticisms: all believers agree that Adam ate and drank in paradise and had a wife. He also adduces the Gospel to show that Christ promised at the Last Supper to drink again with his disciples in the Kingdom of Heaven.[76] The scriptural proof provided by verses such as Matt 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18, 30 were exploited by several other Muslim apologists, including ʿAlī l-Ṭabarī and al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb.[77]

Clearly, scripture was not going to give a decisive answer as to which of these conflicting views was right. But there were other kinds of approaches to the issue. John of Damascus decided to make the Muslim paradise look ridiculous. He asks sarcastically whether people will not have a hangover after drinking from the river of wine and then miss out on all the other pleasures of paradise.[78] Apparently he was not aware of the fact that the Qur'an states explicitly that the heavenly wine does not produce drunkenness and headaches.[79] In the same vein, Christian polemicists—East and West—have tried to taunt Muslims by asking precisely the question which Muḥammad asks in the *Legend*: what happens to the food and drink after it has been consumed? This is not clarified in the Qur'an.[80] The response was therefore formulated in ḥadīth: 'The people of paradise will eat and drink but not urinate and defecate; their food will disappear through sweat which has the pleasant scent of musk'.[81]

Two things are worth noting in the ḥadīths about this theme. First of all, as Aguadé has shown in his survey of the elaborations of this issue,

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[76] Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulman anonyme', pp. 22–23; Gaudeul, 'The Correspondance between Leo and 'Umar', pp. 152–153.

[77] Mingana, *ʿAlī Ṭabarī. The Book of Religion and Empire. Arabic Text*, p. 133 (t); Mingana, *ʿAlī Ṭabarī. The Book of Religion and Empire. Translated*, p. 157 (tr); Sepmeijer, *Een Weerlegging van het Christendom*, p. 158 (t), p. 86 (tr). This theme was further elaborated by later anti-Christian polemicists such as Ibn Ḥazm and al-Qarāfī. See Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, pp. 136–138.

[78] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 140–141 (ttr); Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, pp. 82–83 (ttr).

[79] Q 37:47, Q 56:19

[80] Although perhaps the words *azwāj muṭahhara*, 'purified partners', in Q 2:25 could have been meant to express the idea that the Houris have no defecation and menstruation etc, as Aguadé suggested. This is, at any rate, the explanation for these words in several works of *tafsīr*. See: Aguadé, '"Inna llaḏī ya'kulu wa-yašrabu"', p. 66 and n. 32.

[81] Ibn Kathīr, *al-Nihāya fī l-fitan wa-l-malāḥim*, p. 409 and many similar sayings as for example: Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kītāb al-zuhd wa-l-raqāʾiq*, p. 70, p. 77; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 354; ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 11, pp. 414–416.

it occurs in some of the oldest surviving ḥadīth collections.[82] Already in the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Hammām ibn Munabbih (d. 721), which has come down to us in the *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 827), the Prophet is made to declare that there is no excrement in paradise,[83] while in one of the ḥadīths in the collection of Rishdīn ibn Saʿd (d. 804), the Prophet says that not even the heavenly horses, which transport people on their celestial journeys, defecate.[84] Second of all, there are two categories within these traditions—one which simply says that there is no excrement, while the other gives the explanation of perfumed transpiration. The assertion that people would exude the remnants of their food through their skin presumably came at a subsequent stage in the enunciation of this belief, so as to make it look physically more plausible than a total absence of discharge.

In a ḥadīth in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, a Jew confronts Muḥammad with the idea of the heaven without digestion and points out that it is inconceivable: 'everyone who eats and drinks *must* have nature's call'.[85] Muḥammad replies that the heavenly excrement is sweat with the smell of musk.[86] The fact that it is a Jew bringing up this issue here could well be a reflection of the disputational context in which this doctrine has come into being.

The Jew's judgment that the heavenly lack of digestion is outright impossible is voiced in a much more elaborate and judicious manner in a comprehensive philosophical work by the East-Syrian thinker Job of Edessa. This author was one of the Syriac scholars of the early phase of the translation movement in Baghdad, well-versed in all scientific fields and employed as a doctor by al-Maʾmūn.[87] His *Book of Treasures*, probably written in 817,[88] demonstrates that the possibility of the absence

[82] Aguadé, '"Inna llaḏī yaʾkulu wa-yašrabu"'.

[83] Hammām ibn Munabbih, *Ṣaḥīfa*, p. 373.

[84] Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, vol. 2, p. 200 (t).

[85] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, vol. 4, 367.

[86] A tenth-century Byzantine polemicist who wrote the *Letter to the Emir of Damascus* clearly did not understand the idea of excrement transpiring as musk. He claims that if people dispose of their waste products through their pores, i.e. many holes, they will stink even more than on earth, where they use one hole. Therefore it in unimaginable that they will have enough musk to counteract the stench. See Karlin-Hayter, 'Arethas' Letter to the Emir', p. 301 (t); Abel, 'La lettre polémique «D'Aréthas»', pp. 368–369 (tr).

[87] Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 3, p. 333.

[88] On the basis of a likely reference to the fourth Arab civil war; Mingana, *Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, on p. 389 (t) p. 154 (tr), and Mingana's comments in the introduction, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

of excrement in paradise was more than a just frivolous discussion. On the face of it, the *Book of Treasures* seems a classic philosophical-cosmological treatise. Yet the apologetic thread that he wove through this piece of scholarship is distinctive.[89] Job employs the philosophy of the ancients to expose the truth of his religion, and he also states the explicit need for this, since many non-Christians do not accept Biblical proof texts.[90] Aristotle, Galen and, above all, Hippocrates provide him with some fundamental evidence concerning the elements and forces of this physical world, as well as the inferable existence of a metaphysical realm. A central aspect of his task is to show that that these worlds are necessarily distinct, and yet made up of the same elements. It is striking to see that after five long chapters on subjects as wide-ranging as the elements, physiology, the senses, meteorology and astrology, his exposé culminates in a shrewd attack on the notion of a corporeal heaven, which he challenges on several grounds. His personal view is that those in heaven are entirely liberated from their bodies. The happiness which is specific to the body, such as resulting from eating and drinking, is always in reaction to a need, but in the next world there are no antagonistic forces which create needs, nor is there any physical burden that may obstruct the true knowledge of the Divine.[91] Nonetheless, Job of Edessa goes on to theorize about a heaven in which one can eat and drink without its negative consequences. Positing the existence of such a place, he shows that it has much more serious implications than one would think at first sight. If we try to understand that other world with the knowledge of biology and physics of the world known to us, then we would have to conclude that that world would necessarily include suffering:

> The fact of our eating in a corporeal way involves the thick matter of food, the quantity of which diminishes from outside through transference, and is added to the body inside. If a body fed without an increase to itself, or if the food added to it were not digested, or if the digested

[89] See Reinink, 'The 'Book of Nature' and Syriac Apologetics'.

[90] Mingana, *Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, p. 458 (t), pp. 278–279 (tr). He mentions some of his other works here which deal more concretely with the Christian faith, one of which contains ten syllogisms which prove Christ's divine and human natures as well as Scriptural proof for them. In another one, called *On Faith*, he avoids Biblical testimony altogether.

[91] The claim that the delights of the Muslim heaven consists of nothing more than the relief of needs and burdens also forms the gist of the East-Syrian Patriarch Elijah II's treatise on the afterlife; Samir, 'Maqāla fī naʿīm al-ākhira'. Similarly: Gianazza, *Élie II (†1131). Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn*, vol. 2, pp. 390–391.

> food were not ejected by the excretory power, or if a change did not take place in the bowels, the odour would become malignant, and there would be suffering emanating from its great quantity, and sometimes also illness.[92]

In other words, *something* must happen to the food in one way or another, and all possibilities represent some kind of burden.

On the other hand—and this is undoubtedly Job's most original argument—it is not impossible that there is a third world. This is a world in which physics works differently from that which humankind has discovered so far (this, of course, constituting the substance of his book). One could always claim that there is a radically different world somewhere else—God is omnipotent after all—but the problem, in Job's view, is that we can only accept it through faith. His reasoning is the following:

> The general consensus of opinion among rational men will not accept the assertion that the body could receive food without an increase to itself, together with the other consequences which we have enumerated. If it does accept this assertion, it will only be by faith. Such an assertion would indeed resemble that of a man telling us: 'This year or today, two and two make four; but next year or tomorrow, these two and two make ten. You should accept this by faith.[93]

This is an unmistakable taunt to his Muslim colleagues. The *mutakallimūn* were strongly attached to the idea that their beliefs could be sanctioned by reason. The usual tenor of their anti-Christian writings was that their faith is rationally defendable, whereas the core of the Christian faith is irrational. Job of Edessa obviously attempts to show that it is rather the opposite.

Several Muslim scholars of the same period, in particular the Muʿtazilīs, wrote treatises on 'heavenly delight', and part of the discourse on this issue may have come as a response to this type of critique. A striking title in this respect is Ḥumayd ibn Saʿīd's *Against the Christians on the issue of heavenly delight and food and drink in the afterlife and against all who contested it*, written also in the ninth century.[94] Its author, possibly a Murjiʾī, is relatively little known, although Ibn al-Nadīm mentions no less than

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[92] Mingana, *Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, p. 464 (t), p. 290 (tr).

[93] Mingana, *Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa*, p. 465 (t), p. 290 (tr).

[94] *Kitāb ʿalā l-Naṣārā fī l-naʿīm wa-l-akl wa-l-shurb fī l-ākhira wa-ʿalā jamīʿ man qāla bi-ḍidd dhālika*. It has not survived but is mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*: Fück, 'Neue Materialien', p. 309.

thirteen *kalām* works of his in his *Fihrist*.[95] The Muʿtazilī treatises on '*al-naʿīm*', written by Job's contemporaries and known primarily through later refutations, testify to the fact that that there was lively debate on the conditions of the hereafter, and that the Qurʾanic statements about eternal reward and corporeality were often challenged by these scholars as well.[96]

It is quite striking that Job of Edessa does not mention the evaporation of excrement explicitly. This idea must have existed already at the time,[97] so presumably he did not know about it, as there is no reason why he would have consciously ignored it. The *Legend*, as we have seen, *does* mention the issue of transpiration; it is the monk's solution to potential objections. The content of the polemic comes to the same conclusion: the tenet is impossible. Job explains it through elaborate philosophical critique, while the *Legend* does so through allusive historicizing polemic. Succinct as the exchange of words between Baḥīrā and Muḥammad may be, the idea expressed is that the heaven without excrement can only be a figment of man's imagination. It is a stopgap measure invented to counteract the nasty consequences of a fantastic doctrine.

As a curious example of how this issue lived on in Christian polemics against Islam, and how the arguments developed further, it is interesting to mention the apologetics of Ramon Llull (d. 1316).[98] This Dominican friar, well-known for devoting his life to the experimentation with different methods for converting the Jews and the Muslims, wrote a *Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men*, which, he explained, was based on a Christian Arabic work that does not appear to have survived. In it a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim try to guide a gentile to the truth. The

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[95] Listed in Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 6, p. 357; about him adhering to the Murjiʾa, see the author's comments in vol. 4, pp. 131–133.

[96] About the divergence of views on the topic as well as some similarities with internal Christian debate, see: Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 6, pp. 543–561 and vol. 3, pp. 255–263.

[97] As mentioned above, p. 98, ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d. 827) and Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 797) already knew of ḥadīths about it. Aguadé says its origin can be traced back even a century further, because Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal presents it on authority of Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh whose *Ṣaḥīfa* he integrated in his *Musnad* and who died in 697.

[98] Christians also got back a taste of their own polemics through the Islamicate Jewish polemical work of Nestor the Priest, in which it is claimed that if Christ, in his human and divine nature, sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven he must be polluting the place. See: Lasker and Stroumsa, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, part 2, p. 34, p. 97 (t), part 1, p. 57, p. 103 (tr).

book does not reveal which religion the gentile chooses in the end, but it is nevertheless clear that he is not convinced by Islam. The gentile's response to the Islamic depiction of heaven also includes a comment about it being filled with excrement rather than with the glory in God.[99] That Llull was himself disgusted with the Islamic paradise comes out in several of his works.[100] Llull's particular way of casting doubt on the existence of such a world is by pointing out that Muslim philosophers do not believe in it either. And he was right. His Saracen says '[t]here are others among us who take this glory morally and interpret it spiritually, saying that Mohammed was speaking metaphorically to people who were backward and without understanding'.[101]

This reminds one, above all, of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 1037), who believed that eternal pleasure resided in the rational soul's attainment of the world of the intelligibles with which it becomes unified. In order to reach this state of being the soul has to be freed from all corruptibility. Therefore Ibn Sīnā considered the Qur'anic descriptions of paradise as incorrect or, at best, only of value to those who lead a moral but non-contemplative life. The Prophet used this kind of language, Ibn Sīnā explained, to reach his uneducated audience.[102]

Ibn Sīnā's ideas bring us back to the *Legend*. The recension A2, in fact, plays with this idea of an outward meaning of the imagery of the Islamic paradise ({16.5}). Whether the reverberation of Muslim philosophy is intentional or not, it is noteworthy that in this recension the pleasures of paradise are portrayed as having a hidden spiritual meaning.[103] The monk is shown to be conceding to the mindset of the Arabs when telling them about the rivers in paradise, but he explicitly states that the four rivers are 'symbol and sign' of the four Gospels that water the whole of creation. A1 expresses a similar idea ({16.5}, {16.7}), when it uses the simile of immature children for whom the reward in the hereafter has to be depicted in material terms. Here one notices the

99 Bonner, *Doctor Illuminatus*, p. 159 (tr).

100 See Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 173.

101 Bonner, *Doctor Illuminatus*, p. 160 (tr).

102 Ibn Sīnā's ideas about the paradise for the philosophers and the rather different reward for the ordinary people are to found in many of his works. A discussion of this topic can be found in Stroumsa, '"True Felicity"'. How Medieval Christian philosophers disentangled Islamic philosophy from the Islam of ordinary people by means of this type of argumentation is discussed in: Tolan, 'Saracen Philosophers secretly deride Islam'.

103 It is tempting to use the terms *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* (the exoteric vs the esoteric meaning) here, but these are not used in the Legend itself.

difference between the Syriac and the Arabic recensions. In the former the emphasis is on Islam being man-made, while in the latter it is on its being man-made for a particular audience, namely, the Arabs who need to be guided to the faith in ways that did not conflict with their traditional worldview.

CHAPTER FIVE

# THE QUR'AN AGAINST ISLAM

By means of selecting what at first sight may look like a random miscellany of verses from the Qur'an, the two Arabic versions of the *Legend* try to corroborate the thesis that the Qur'an has a demonstrable Christian origin and consists of a Christian message that has been gradually adapted to the worldview and the customs of the Arabs. The verses that appear in these versions are selected in such a way as to support these two fundamental claims of the *Legend*. With some verses one can recognize instantly why they would specifically have been chosen, such as when they express ideas about God and religion which are fully in line with Christian ideas. At other instances, however, this is not the case, and especially in the cases where there is no explanation of the verse in question, the reader has to search elsewhere to understand its relevance. In most cases either Muslim or Christian exegesis of the verse concerned can help us to understand its function in the *Legend*. Obviously, 'Muslim exegesis' refers to the corpus of Qur'an commentaries, *tafsīr*s, in which interpretations of verses of the Qur'an are collected, explained and traced back to specific events in the life of the Prophet, as known from tradition. With regard to the Qur'an, the term 'Christian exegesis' is less straightforward and needs to be elucidated. There are no collections of Christian interpretations of Qur'anic verses, and one would not expect them to exist, given that the Qur'an is not considered a divinely revealed Scripture by Christians. However, Christian exegesis of the Qur'an *does* exist in another form; not in standard collections, but scattered around the many works of Christian Arab and Syriac thinkers who tried to both to understand and to refute Islam. They considered it meaningful to turn to the Qur'an for two reasons: first, to refute Islam's claims to divine truth; and then, simultaneously, to defend Christian doctrine.[1]

[1] Paul Khoury describes this phenomenon in 'Exégèse chrétienne du Coran', in *id*, *Matériaux pour servir à l'étude de la controverse*, vol. 5.

As one might expect, the efforts of Christian apologists to make sense of the Qur'an were, unlike those of Muslim exegetes, not aimed at demonstrating the coherence of God's communication to humankind. The goal of the Christian apologists was rather to show that Islam could not rival Christianity, a task they approached with what has been called a lesser degree of 'charity'. In connection with reading holy texts the 'principle of charity' has been defined as 'an interpretative method that would yield an optimally successful text'.[2] A text that is part of a canon of Holy Books is read by the members of the community to whom these books belong with the understanding that it is at all times meaningful, consistent and authoritative. Senseless passages and apparent contradictions in the text are therefore harmonized with the higher overarching meaning on which the community in question has reached consensus; for in this way primary doctrines could be safeguarded and the 'optimal text' sustained. The principle of charity has been aptly described as a community's 'obligation to the text', which in the case of Sunnī Islam is observable, for example, in the hermeneutics of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh*, and—somewhat paradoxically—in the Ashʿarī principle of *bi-lā kayf*. Some of the Qur'anic passages that required such harmonizing drew the close attention of Christians (and other non-Muslims), who were of course not tied to these charitable hermeneutics and so were inclined to read such verses by recourse to the *ẓāhir*, i.e. their immediate literal meaning.[3] They could demolish the interpretative structures of *tafsīr* by simply drawing attention to the plain and obvious meaning of certain Qur'anic phrases. It needs to be stressed, however, that the hostile readings of the Qur'an in their writings consisted of more than random disconnected arguments. These readings often had their own specific underlying principles and aims, through which the interpretations of individual verses were bound together. Moreover, Christians developed to some degree a communal consensus on the meaning of the Qur'an. Both of these aspects of Christian hermeneutics of the Qur'an can be illustrated here by an example.

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[2] Halbertal, *People of the Book*, p. 27.

[3] For an example of Qur'anic exegesis of an Arabic-speaking Jew that resembles that of Christian-speaking Arabs, see below, p. 148, n. 63. Vestiges of an early ninth-century Manichean polemical reading of the Qur'an, attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and quoting several verses which appear in Arabic Christian treatises as well, can be found in al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm's refutation of it: Guidi, *La lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo*. See also Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2, pp. 29–35 and vol. 5, pp. 104–108.

The opening words of the second *sūra* of the Qur'an read as follows: *A L M. That is the book in which there is no doubt, a guidance for the God-fearing.* Several Christian apologists advanced an audacious interpretation of the three 'secret letters' with which the verse begins. Patriarch Timothy tells his interlocutor, the Caliph al-Mahdī, that the letters, being three in number, probably refer to the Trinity, whereas Paul of Antioch states that *A L M* is an abbreviation of Christ, al-Masīḥ. The verse's subsequent reference to 'the book', he claims, is a reference to the Gospel.[4] The same claim was made by al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl, who presented this reading of the verse as a defense against the Muslim accusation of falsification of the Bible.[5]

One might say that, on the face of it, the only element from which one could draw some support for such a reading of '*that is the book in which there is no doubt*' is the demonstrative pronoun '*that*', which suggests that it does not refer to the Qur'an itself. At the same time the grounds on which it can be interpreted as a reference to the Gospel seem to be lacking. However, the Christian interpretation of some other Qur'anic verses reveals that Christians maintained that logically the '*guidance*' (*hudā*) mentioned in the verse must be a reference to the guidance that Christ brought to humankind. By frequently reciting the *Fātiḥa*, Muslims implore God to guide them to the straight path (Q 1:6). In the eyes of Christian interpreters this implied that they are not guided yet.[6] Yet the Qur'an certifies that the Gospel was given as 'guidance and admonition to the godfearing' (Q 5:46). Some Christian polemicists concluded from these two points that Muslims are seeking the guidance embodied in the teachings of Christ. Pseudo-al-Kindī debates this extensively in his *Apology*. In order to answer the question what kind of guidance Muslims are seeking, he reviews all existing religions and shows that the Qur'an disapproves of every single one of them, except Christianity.[7] This equation of 'guidance' with Christian faith could subsequently add weight to the identification of

[4] Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, p. 65* (t), p. 173 (tr); Mingana, 'Timothy's Apology', pp. 139–140 (t), p. 67 (tr.). This is the long Syriac version of this debate. The Arabic version (Caspar, 'Les versions arabes du dialogue' and Putman, *L'Eglise et l'Islam sous Timothée*) does not raise this issue and generally makes less use of the Qur'an.

[5] Samir, 'La réponse d'al-Ṣafī, p. 322 (t).

[6] This is being claimed, among others, in the *Debate of Theodore and al-Ma'mūn* (Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 75 (t)) and in the *Debate of George the Monk* (Carali, *Le Christianisme et l'Islam*, 81 (t), Nicoll, 'Account of a disputation', p. 422 (tr)).

[7] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 130–131, Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 241–242 (tr).

Q 2:1–3 as a reference to the Gospel and Christ. The fact that certain *mufassirūn* struggled with the question as to which scripture the 'book' of Q 2:1–3 referred was even more grist for the mill of the Christian *mufassirūn*.[8]

This example shows the existence of what one can rightly call 'Christian exegesis of the Qur'an'. It reflects a systematic effort to reach a consistent, albeit primarily apologetic, reading of the Qur'an that goes beyond the limits of individual verses or *sūra*s. It also illustrates my assertion, expressed above, that Near Eastern Christians reached a communal consensus about the proper interpretation of the Qur'an; their *tafsīr* went well beyond the boundaries of their respective communities and time periods. An eighth-century East-Syrian Patriarch from Iraq (Timothy), an eleventh/twelfth-century Melkite bishop from Syria (Paul of Antioch), and a thirteenth-century Coptic canonist from Egypt (al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl) all agree on how to interpret Q 2:1–3.

### *Early development of Christian exegesis of the Qur'an*

Interestingly, the roots of this exegesis lie in the very first apologetic efforts of Arab Christians. The oldest physically surviving piece of Arab Christian apologetics is to be found in the Heidelberger papyrus fragment Schott Reinhardt 438, which is dated to the mid- or second half of the eighth century on paleographical grounds.[9] Although many of its passages are illegible, it survives in reasonable enough shape to determine that Christian exegesis of the Qur'an was already burgeoning in the eighth century. Not only do we find many quotations of the Qur'an in this text, it is also clear that its author was acquainted with Muslim exegesis, or perhaps more precisely, that Muslim exegesis developed against the background of Muslim-Christian debate. This is shown in the few phrases dealing with Q 5:116, in which God confronts Christ with the critical question 'did you say to the people "take me and my mother as two gods, next to God"?' The author of the text that survives in the Heidelberg papyri asks: '[did God ask] this question before

[8] See Berg, 'Ṭabarī's Exegesis of the Qur'ānic term al-Kitāb', esp. pp. 767–768.

[9] Graf, 'Christlich-arabische Texte', pp. 1–2. The provenance of the piece has not been determined. Graf leans towards dating its text to the mid-eighth century, because this textual witness, which was written either in the mid or late eighth century appears to be a copy of an earlier version.

your Prophet or after him?'[10] This is exactly the same question that was addressed by the *mufassirūn*.[11]

An indirect attestation of the existence of this phenomenon is to be found in the *Sīra* of Ibn Hishām. He lashes out against Christians who think they know better than Muslims what the Qur'an has to say. He gives the example of Christians adducing Qur'anic verses in which God uses verbs in the first person plural, when describing His actions. Ibn Hishām refers to it as the specious argument (*shubha*) of 'We created,' 'We did' and 'We commanded', and claims that it was used by the Christian deputation of Najrān that visited the Prophet, whose leaders said 'If God were one He would have said, 'I have done, I have created' etc.'[12] In order to refute their insinuation that the Qur'an is the speech of their 'triune' God, he turns to Q 3:7, which was believed to have been revealed on the occasion of the deputation. In the verse it is explained that both clear verses and ambiguous verses have been revealed in the Qur'an. Ibn Hishām seeks recourse to exegesis of the verse in order to defend Muslim understanding of the Qur'an:

> …*as to those in whose hearts is a deviation*, i.e. turning away from true guidance, *they follow what is ambiguous in it*, i.e. what can be otherwise interpreted to substantiate thereby what they have invented and introduced anew that they may have an argument and a plausible reason for their doctrine, *desiring fitna*, i.e. confusion, and *desiring an arbitrary interpretation*, e.g. the error they adopted in explaining 'We created' and 'We decreed'. *And no one knows its interpretation*, i.e. what they mean by it, *except God and those well-versed in knowledge. They say, We believe in it. Everything comes from our Lord.* So how can there be any controversy when it is one speech from one Lord? Then [the well-versed in knowledge][13] harmonized the interpretation of the ambiguous with the clear-cut which can have only one meaning and thus the book becomes consistent, one part confirming another, the argument effective and the case clear; falsehood is excluded and unbelief is overcome […].[14]

Ibn Hishām is essentially describing and defending the principle of charity in exegesis, saying that ambiguous verses (*al-mutashābihāt*) need

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[10] Graf, 'Christlich-arabische Texte', pp. 16–19 (ttr). For the role of this verse, in Muslim-Christian polemic, see also: A2, p. 513, n. 136, and Ch. 1, p. 14, n. 12.

[11] See for example: al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, part 7, pp. 88–89.

[12] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, p. 403. The words between inverted commas are all part of Q 3:7.

[13] My addition; it can be inferred from the positive conclusion that the verb in the third person plural refers to the *rāsikhūn fī l-ʿilm*, not to the Christians of Najrān.

[14] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 404–405. My translation is an adaptation of Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 273.

to be interpreted in accordance with the meaning derived from the obvious, clear-cut verses (*al-muḥkamāt*). To him it is clear that expressions like 'We created' belong to the ambiguous parts of the Qur'an. In reality it is, of course, his 'charity' that leads him to conclude this, as his belief in absolute *tawḥīd* has priority over the words of his Scripture. Christian apologists, on the other hand, focused on the plain grammatical construction of the plural verb forms and argued that these expressions are unambiguous. They had no reason to think that they are not clear-cut; or, to put the matter differently, they had vital reasons to think that they are, since to them these were references to the Trinity.

Leaving the actual argumentation aside, it is interesting to see that in the early ninth century Muslims were aware of Christian readings of the Qur'an. Ibn Hishām's attribution of this type of interreligious debate to the Medinan phase of Islam is presumably anachronistic. In all likelihood his account merely reflects Muslim-Christian discussions as they developed during the eighth century.

The development of this type of anti-Muslim exegesis must be one of the reasons why the Pact of 'Umar includes a clause saying that Christians are prohibited from teaching the Qur'an to their children.[15] It is hardly conceivable that this would refer to systematic instruction in the subject of the Qur'an; it is more likely that Christian parents were suspected of providing their children with a set of useful Qur'anic verses that could be turned around to serve as ready-made arguments in debate with Muslims. It is also unlikely that systematic instruction is being referred to here, simply because of the enormous costs involved in acquiring a Qur'an. So how did Arabic-speaking Christians become acquainted with its text? The most likely access they had to it was by listening to Qur'anic recitation. In the *Legend* we find some instances of misquotations that seem to point at aural memorization, when a few words in a verse are substituted by words similar in meaning and used elsewhere in the Qur'an in similar contexts. One finds an example in the quotation of verse Q 17:59, which mentions Thamūd's treatment of the she-camel sent by God: '*Nothing prevented Us from sending signs, except that the ancients cried lies to them. We brought Thamūd a she-camel as a clear sign, but they hamstrung her, so their Lord destroyed them*'.[16] The end of the verse is incorrect and comes in fact from Q 91:14; it should have been '*and they treated her badly*'. The words given in the *Legend*, however, feature in a

[15] For the Pact of 'Umar, see also Ch. 4, pp. 113–114.
[16] See A2 {18.43}, p. 423.

Qur'anic passage dealing with exactly the same topic, i.e. Q 91:11–14. It is undoubtedly the thematic and semantic resemblance that is to blame for the conflation.[17]

From the late seventh century onwards the message of the Qur'an was disseminated throughout the Near East in inscriptions on buildings and coins. This was another source through which non-Muslims could become acquainted with the Qur'an. The *Legend* includes a clear example of the fact that its Qur'anic verses were not simply taken from a *muṣḥaf*. In {16.26} A2 includes a verse which, again, seems perfectly Qur'anic: '*Muḥammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it triumph over the whole of religion, though the polytheists be averse*'. The first part of this 'verse', '*Muḥammad is the messenger of God*' is to be found in Q 48:29. The rest is not an exact Qur'anic quotation but closely resembles the two identical verses Q 9:33 and Q 61:9: '*it is He who sent His messenger with guidance*…etc'.[18] It is the divergence from the Qur'anic text which betrays the fact that this 'verse' was taken by the redactor of the *Legend* from another source than a *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'an. These words constitute a popular slogan frequently used in Muslim inscriptions, such as in the mosque of Medina, but also on coins and in protocols. It was imprinted on the margins of the first dirhams from ʿAbd al-Malik's coinage reform in 696 and it continued to be used under the early ʿAbbasids.[19] This caused the motto to be widely disseminated and it is hardly surprising that someone reading it would assume that it is a part of the Qur'an.[20]

It also seems that Christian Arabs picked up verses that were the object of intra-Muslim discussions and/or used as slogans and proof texts by certain segments of Muslim society. The *Legend* as well as Abraham of Tiberias quote Q 49:13, '*O people, We have made you into peoples and tribes in order that you know that the noblest of you with God is the*

[17] A similar case can be found in {16.17}. See p. 461, n. 41.

[18] Cf. the similar verse Q 48:28.

[19] Hoyland, 'Early Arabic Inscriptions', and *id*, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 699–702; M. Cook, *The Koran*, p. 58 for an image of such a coin from 79 AH; see also the next note.

[20] Nevo and Koren have drawn attention to this quasi-Qur'anic slogan in their *Crossroads to Islam*, citing examples and sources on pp. 356–366, pp. 396–397. To them it is part of a pre-canonical Qur'an, but it makes little sense that the name of Muḥammad would have been omitted from this passage during the canonization process (see their farfetched argumentation on p. 358). It is more likely that the verse Q 9:33/Q 61:9 was altered slightly for the inscriptions, so as to include the name of the Prophet, so that the propaganda referring to the triumph of the 'religion of truth' could not be mistaken for that of another religion.

*most pious of you*'.[21] This is the *locus classicus* of the Shuʿūbiyya, whose proponents saw it as a proof of equality between Arabs and non-Arabs, because it can be seen as a denial of the notion that Arab descent is a criterion for superiority in the eyes of God.[22] Another example of such a verse is Q 51:56 (*I have not created mankind and the jinn except to worship Me*), which was a proof text of the Qadariyya. These defenders of free will in early Islam saw it as evidence for their belief, because to them the verse demonstrated that God did not create humans in order to lead them astray, and that He will not obstruct them from fulfilling His purpose.[23]

Although it is clear that Christian access to the text of the Qur'an came through a variety of channels, it would be wrong to portray them as randomly culling their material, without knowledge or consideration of Muslim understanding of it. The verse of the Qadariyya is a well-known example of a verse that featured in theological discussions in which Christians also had a share.[24]

### *Qur'anic exegesis in the Legend*

Let us now place the verses of the *Legend* within the context of the ongoing patterns of Christian exegesis of the Qur'an as illustrated above. By doing this we can enhance our understanding of their evidentiary value for the central objectives of the *Legend* as well as demonstrate the prevalence of its apologetic arguments. A superficial glance at the sum of the verses—approximately forty in A2—reveals a number of basic categories. First of all, we find a large number of verses that highlight the central aspects of the Christian faith. Some of these are at face value opposed to Christian doctrine or have nothing to do with it according

[21] See A2 {16.28}, p. 493, n. 109, and Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 326–327 (ttr).

[22] See Enderwitz, 'Shuʿūbiyya', in which the author mentions that the Khārijīs also used the verse for the same purpose.

[23] Such is the reasoning in the *Risāla* of (pseudo-?) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; see: Ritter, 'Ḥasan al-Baṣrī', p. 68 (t). It is echoed in al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm's refutation of Ibn al-Muqaffa''s attack on Islam; it appears from al-Qāsim's reference to Ibn al-Muqaffa''s tract that the latter used the verse to demonstrate the presence of two opposed powers in the world, since evil cannot be attributed to a god who declares this; Guidi, *La lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo*, p. 34* (t), p. 79 (tr).

[24] Griffith, 'Free will in Christian Kalām'; Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 4, pp. 489–494. Obviously, the contours of Muslim-Christian interaction in early Muslim society and its influence on Christian readings of the Qur'an deserves more in-depth study; see Pietruschka, 'Koranzitaten in christlichen Apologien', as well as the forthcoming dissertation of Clare Wilde (CUA).

to Muslim exegetes until the monk Baḥīrā adds a Christianizing explanation to them. A second category deals with the status of Christians in the Muslim world, anachronistic as this may be within the setting of the *Legend*. A third group of verses can be distinguished in the passages where Baḥīrā designs and adapts Muḥammad's teaching with an eye to his people and invents the acts of worship belonging to it. These are depicted as having been designed primarily as solutions to problems which arose in Muḥammad's embryonic community of followers. Some of these solutions are presented as concessions to the traditions, the thought world, and the needs of the Arabs. As though they were 'supplied on demand', the verses are all intended to demonstrate the contingency of the content of the Qur'an and of Islamic ritual, an idea which in the Syriac recensions is compressed into the one anecdote about the invention of the transpiration of excrement in heaven. Having dealt extensively with this third type of verse in Ch. 4.4 and elsewhere, I will focus on the first two categories in the discussion below.[25] I will first analyze the dynamics of sifting and reinterpreting the Qur'an in the first category, and, where necessary, draw attention to the exegesis of some verses in other Christian apologetic writings.[26]

Evidently the most important verses in the first category would be those which bear witness to the central doctrines of the Christian religion, like the belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation. These are but a few. The verse to which Christian apologists most often refer in this respect, Q 4:171, in which Christ is called '*His Word and a Spirit from Him*', is conspicuous by its absence in the list of quotations, but that is presumably because those words already played a major role in the section about the teaching of the monk to Muḥammad ({14.5?}).[27] The only clear-cut verses from this point of view are those which speak about the Annunciation and the Virgin Birth, Q 3:42 and Q 66:12. The latter is of particular importance for Christian theologians, because it was not only considered as the proof text for the Virgin Birth but also as an example of God's use of the first person plural to refer to Himself ('*We breathed into her from Our Spirit*'). As already became clear in the

[25] See my 'A Christian reading of the Qur'an', pp. 63–70.

[26] This discussion is not exhaustive; other examples have already been discussed in my 'A Christian reading of the Qur'an'; yet other explanations of the relevance of these verses in the Legend can be found in the annotation to the translation of A2.

[27] See the discussion in Ch. 4, pp. 104–113.

passage from the *Sūra* quoted above, such verses were considered to be references to the Trinity. Interestingly, though, the *Legend* emendates the verse slightly. Whereas the Qur'an speaks here about '*Mary, daughter of Imran*', the *Legend* gives: 'Mary, daughter of Joachim'. This is ironic since Christians were eager to point out that the Qur'an was written by someone ill-informed about Biblical history, since it contains an 'error', calling the Virgin 'daughter of 'Imrān'. In their eyes it meant that she had been confused with the sister of Moses and Aaron, the daughter of Amram.[28] The redactor of the *Legend* has changed the verse in order to show its Christian origin in a convincing manner, leaving the suggestion that it underwent corruption later.[29]

The *Legend* also includes Q 3:55, '*O Jesus Christ, I will make thee die and raise thee to me*' etc. It is the standard verse used by Christians in debate with Muslims to refute the claim that Christ did not die on the cross. In the *Legend* the verse is presented as a proof of Christ's crucifixion.[30] The same is intended by the quotation of Christ's words to God in Q 5:117: '*and when You had made me die, You were the watcher over them*'. The verse of the Qur'an which rejects the crucifixion most prominently is Q 4:157: '*They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was suggested to them*'. We also encounter this verse amongst Baḥīrā's writings, and his explanation for it is a simple one: 'With this I mean that Christ did not die in the substance of his divine nature but rather in the substance of his human nature'. Yet another verse in the *Legend*, which is interpreted as a reference of the crucifixion, is Q 5:64: '*the Jews say: "God's hand is fettered". Their hand is fettered and they are cursed for what they said*'. This is a clear example of how Christian Qur'anic exegesis moves against the tide of Muslim understanding of the Qur'an; in *tafsīr* this verse is interpreted as a reference to a blasphemous accusation, made by Jews, that God is withholding His bounty. No connection is made with Christ's crucifixion. According to our text, however, these words refer to the Jews' mockery of Christ when he was on the cross. Other

[28] cf. Numbers 26:59. 'Joachim' is the name of the father of the Virgin Mary according to Christian tradition. It is not attested in the New Testament, but appears for example in the *Proto-Evangelium of James*. For examples of Christian polemicists' indignant responses to this 'error' in the Qur'ān see: the *Letter of Leo III to 'Umar II* (Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', p. 309).

[29] Ěnbāqom, the author of an Ethiopic refutation of Islam entitled *Anqaṣa Amin*, accuses Baḥīrā himself of making this mistake. The author was thoroughly familiar with the Legend (A2) and may have written his own work in Arabic as well; Van Donzel, *'Ěnbāqom. Anqaṣa Amin*, pp. 210–211 (ttr).

[30] See for example: Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 89.

examples of verses in which the 'Christian connection' is not entirely obvious, but which are nevertheless adduced with that perspective, are those mentioning 'the light of God' (i.e. Christ), 'immersion of God' (i.e. baptism), and 'the Night of Power' (Christmas).

This search for supposed glimpses of Christian truths in the Qur'an that could serve as a key to further unlock its 'original' meaning can be found in many other Christian apologetic texts. Predictably, the apologists perused the Qur'an in search of passages about God in which there is mention of 'a son'. The fact that the Qur'an rejects the notion of God having a son most adamantly did not deter some Christians from claiming that it does acknowledge the existence of the Son of God. One of the Schott Reinhardt papyri, which contains one of the oldest surviving Christian pieces of polemic against Islam, lists a number of verses with this intent.[31] A peculiar one amongst these is Q 43:81, '*Say: if the Merciful had a son, I would be the first of the worshippers*'.[32] This is not a statement that supports the notion of God having a son, nor an outright rejection of it. Yet Muslim exegetes, perhaps on account of Christians adducing it, were troubled by it, because it could be seen as suggesting that God could have a son. In tafsīr attempts were made to do away with that suggestion. One of the reinterpretations of the verse was that the first word, 'if' (*in*), should be read as 'not', which is an uncommon homonym. Another explanation of the verse is that the last word, 'worshippers' (*'ābidīn*), should be read as 'deniers', a rare homonym.[33] In the *Legend* we can trace the exchange of views between Muslims and Christians on this verse. Baḥīrā in his 'exegesis' emphasizes that he did not intend the latter part of the sentence to mean 'the first of the deniers', as Muḥammad had wanted to understand it. The monk's explanation is remarkably brief and cryptic. It is interesting to see that the redactor was not only well-informed about Muslim exegesis of the verse, but also counted on his audience understanding the hint at the *mufassirūn*'s anxious attempts to do away with the most immediate meaning of these words. This is another indication of the prevalence of this kind of apologetic argumentation among Arab Christians in their approach to the text of the Qur'an, and it was anything but charitable.

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[31] Graf, 'Christlich-arabische texte', pp. 10–15 (ttr).

[32] The verse also appears in the debate of Theodore Abū Qurra with al-Ma'mūn as if it were a confirmation of God having a son; Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 87.

[33] See for example Abū 'Ubayda, *Majāz al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, pp. 206–207 and Abū 'Alī l-Jubbā'ī's (reconstituted) tafsīr in Gimaret, *Une Lecture Mu'tazilite*, p. 739.

*A 'veiled' reference to the Incarnation in the Qur'an*

Perhaps the most poignant example of how the Qurʾan is 'deciphered' as Christian in our text comes in the second verse which Baḥīrā allegedly wrote. It deserves to be treated here in detail for two reasons. First of all, it is one of the few verses which, in contrast to many already discussed, is not to be found in any other Christian apologetic text. Secondly, it shows to what length the Arab Christians would go to see their own faith confirmed in the Qurʾan.

If Christian apologists had searched for the term 'son of God' in the Qurʾan, it is hardly surprising that they would also look there for another of the foundations of their faith—namely, 'the image of God'. Considering that this verse in Genesis 1:27 formed one of the strongest anchors of Christian apologetics from its very inception, finding an echo of it in the Qurʾan would have been the ultimate Christian testimonium 'after the fact'. Yet no such *tashbīh* is found in the Qurʾan.[34] The *Legend*, for its part, tries nevertheless to suggest that the term 'image' or 'form' plays a significant role in the Qurʾan. The 'verse' in question is the following:

> a most excellent *ingenious form* like a veiled mighty king

Only the words '*ingenious form*' can be recognized as Qurʾanic.[35] They are spelt as *ṣūra* (صورة) *muḥkama*, which resembles Q 47:20 in which mention is made of a *sūra* (سورة) *muḥkama*. This verse reads:

> *Those who believe say, 'Why has a sūra not been sent down?' Then when a decisive sūra is sent down and therein fighting is mentioned, thou seest those in whose hearts is sickness looking at thee as one who swoons of death.*

*Sūra* is the word that is used uniquely for a chapter of the Qurʾan. Whether our Christian author is wilfully or accidentally misreading (or rather: 'mishearing') this as *ṣūra*, meaning 'form' or 'image', is unclear.[36] As already stated above, within the corpus of texts of Muslim-

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[34] In early hadīth there are echoes of Gen 1:27, where it is said that Adam was created in God's image; Kister, 'Ādam. A study of some legends', pp. 137–138. For echoes of this notion in Islamic theology, see: Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 4, pp. 377–383.

[35] Although it can never be entirely excluded that this supposed verse featured in a non-standard Qurʾan, it is extremely unlikely that a Christian Arab writing in the ninth century or later would have transmitted pre-canonical verses, absent in the *textus receptus*. See also my comments to the claims of Nevo and Koren on p. 135, n. 20 above.

[36] If my interpretation of this 'verse' is correct, the author must have 'form'/'image'

Christian debate in Arabic there are no quotations of these two words. Nevertheless there is a theme in these texts, which helps us to make sense of the 'verse' concerned. It is the second half of this supposed verse, '*like a veiled mighty king*', which shows us in which direction we have to search for its meaning, for it refers to a frequently encountered allegorical explanation of the Incarnation in Christian-Arabic writings.

One of the ways in which Christians, long before their confrontation with Islam, made the mystery of the Incarnation intelligible to themselves and to others was by picturing it as God's clothing Himself in humanity. More specifically, some Christian writers portrayed it as God's disguising Himself in man. The metaphorical language of the Divine 'hiding in the robe of humanity' is not uncommon amongst the Syriac Fathers like Ephrem, Narsai and Jacob of Sarug.[37] This notion visualizes one of the paradoxes of the Incarnation: on the one hand, it illustrates the proximity of God to humankind when He appeared within His creation. On the other hand, it emphasizes that with the body of man 'put on' God was disguised. Christ's actions on earth, his humility and his apparent weaknesses and human needs, were part of His stratagem to deceive Satan and redeem humankind.

One of the oldest Christian-Arabic texts which uses this language of the divine disguise very frequently, and which touches on these two aspects, is the anonymous treatise *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*. On the one hand it tells us that:

> God willed mercy to His creatures and honour to them, and the Christ was between us and God, the God of God, and a Man, the judge of men by their deeds. Thus God was veiled in a Man without sin, and shewed us mercy in the Christ, and *brought us near to Him*.[38]

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in mind, instead of 'chapter of the Qur'an', which he has misspelled. In Christian-Arabic *ṣūra* is used for a Bible text, a fact which probably contributed to the confusion. (Graf, *Verzeichnis*, p. 72; cf. *ṣūrtā* in Syriac). Judeo-Arabic knows the same usage (See the Jewish anti-Christian polemic of Nestor the Priest, which mentions the seventh *ṣūra* of Paul, (Lasker and Stroumsa, *Nestor the Priest*, part 2, p. 39)). In the *Debate of Theodore Abū Qurra with al-Ma'mūn* the chapters of the Qur'an are spelt *ṣūra* in a number of cases (Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 79, p. 80) The manuscripts of the *Kitāb al-burhān* of Peter of Bayt Ra's vary in spelling when talking about Moses' 'song', *sūra*/*ṣūra*, to Israel (Cachia and Watt, *The Book of Demonstration*, vol. 2, p. 43 (t), vol 2, p. 28, n. 5 (tr)). I have checked the variant readings of this verse in Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, to rule out that the word is also spelled with *ṣād* in early *maṣāḥif*.

[37] A number of examples are to be found in: Brock, 'Clothing metaphors'.

[38] Dunlop Gibson, 'An Arabic Version', p. 13 (tr), p. 85 (t) (my italics).

On the other hand:

> God sent from His throne His Word which is from Himself, and saved the race of Adam and clothed Himself with this weak conquered Man through Mary the good, whom God chose from the women of the ages. *He was veiled in her, and by that He destroyed the Evil One*, and conquered and subdued him and left him weak and contemptible.[39]

This is one of many Christian-Arabic texts that include this motif of 'veiling'. It is a standard item in Christian-Arabic apologetics vis-à-vis Islam from all the Arab Christian communities.[40] Swanson has clearly shown, in a detailed study of the subtle ways in which Arab Christians used Qur'anic language, that the Qur'an was a source of inspiration for it.[41] In Q 42:51, and implicitly in other verses, the Qur'an asserts that God will not speak to mankind except through revelation, from behind a veil, or through an apostle. This constitutes a challenge to the very foundations of Christianity and in search of replies Christian apologists asserted that Christ's humanity *was* the veil through which God revealed Himself.[42]

In the *Debate of Theodore Abū Qurra and al-Ma'mun* there is an echo of another relevant passage of the Qur'an. One of the Muslim participants in the debate asks how the Word of God could possibly be confined to the womb of a woman. As part of his reply Theodore asks: 'Why would it not be possible that he dwells in one of his creatures, whose appearance is in his image and likeness and assumes a veil for himself?'[43] The wording is highly suggestive here: *wa-tattakhidha lahā ḥijāban*. The phrase closely resembles a Qur'anic phrase in Q 19:17, within the context of the story of the Annunciation. There the subject is Mary who 'took a veil apart from them', *fa-ttakhadhat min dūnihim ḥijāban'*. There is little doubt that the composer of this debate intends to subvert the accepted meaning of Q 19:17 when he turns it into a reference to the Incarnation.

To return to the question of the '*ṣūra muḥkama*', already in early Christian times the robe of humanity in which the Divine had appeared

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[39] Dunlop Gibson, 'An Arabic Version', p. 11 (tr), p. 83 (t) (my italics).

[40] With Abū Rā'ita: Graf, *Die Schriften des Jacobiten*, vol. 1, p. 160 (t), vol. 2, p. 195 (tr); Ibn al-Muqaffa': Ebied and Young, *The Lamp of the Intellect*, vol. 1, p. 1, p. 11 (t), vol. 2, p. 1 and p. 10 (tr). For 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, Peter of Bayt Ra's, Paul of Antioch and some more examples from anonymous texts see the references below.

[41] Swanson, 'Beyond Prooftexting'.

[42] Swanson, 'Beyond Prooftexting', pp. 297–302.

[43] Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, pp. 96–97.

became associated with the Biblical expression 'the form of a servant' which Christ, 'who was in the form of God' took upon him, as stated in Phil 2:6–8. Hence the following comparison in the treatise *Fī Tathlīth Allāh al-Wāḥid*:

> The Christ went into Egypt clothed with pure flesh from Mary whom God purified, and by this He honoured us, *as a king honours his servant when he clothes himself in his garment.*[44]

One can understand how this metaphor was used in the apologetics vis-à-vis Islam, as the Qur'an asserts that Christ was a 'servant', *'abd*. One of the responses to this claim was phrased by means of an analogy of a veiled king who mingles with his people by appearing in public disguised as one of them. Such a parable can be found with several apologists.[45] The ninth-century *Kītāb al-burhān* of Peter of Bayt Ra's presents the parable in a full-blown form in the context of a long exposé on the divine economy, *al-tadbīr*. He uses it to illustrate the central point of his explanation of soteriology, namely the fact that the Incarnation is the ultimate proof of God's might, mercy, wisdom and justice:

> The parallel to that is the case of a king who had various servants, some disobedient and hypocritical, and some steady in obedience to him. Now the disobedient and hypocritical ones amongst them corrupted and deceived the obedient ones, until the latter became obedient to them and rebelled with them. They were then unable to find deliverance from the hands of the hypocrites, because they had gained power over them and enslaved them, securing dominion over them when they renounced obedience to their king and when he in consequence was angry with them and cast them out. Subsequently, however, the king had *mercy* on his servants, since they had been deceived and induced to depart from obedience to their master and cast out, and since, from the hypocrites who had duped them, they had met with neither hope nor prospect in their enslavement to them. He desired their deliverance from [the condition] into which they had come, but he did not wage open war against the hypocrites in his royal state, lest he transgress the bounds of *justice* against them. For he knew that they would not be able to withstand him if he came upon them with his royal *might*; on the contrary they would flee and not hold firm against him. There would be no wonder at a mighty king constraining some of his servants who had done evil and rebelled, and there would not be glory in his delivering the other servants from their hands. In his *wisdom*, the king conceived the idea of concealing [his real self] from all the servants whose deliverance he

[44] Dunlop Gibson, 'An Arabic Version', p. 11 (tr), p. 83 (t) (My italics).
[45] See Roggema '*Ḥikāyāt amthāl wa-asmār*', pp. 124–131.

> desired, so that the hypocrites would be emboldened against him and consider him as one of the servants they had subjected, and not flee from fighting him. He did that; he encountered the hypocrites while disguised as one of them; he fought their chief and their mighty one, and felled him in battle in a *skilful manner* which he showed to the despised servants, and made them perceive how to have recourse to it and how to keep to his example in it. The hypocrites were overcome and put to flight, and the other servants learned how to struggle and fight against them. Thus the king's aim of rescuing certain of his servants was fulfilled—by an act of *mercy* toward them, by *power* in the effectiveness of his stratagem for putting the hypocrites to flight, by *justice* towards them without any constraint upon them, and by *wisdom* in teaching the weak ones to fight the strong ones and vanquish them.[46]

The author calls the king of this story an analogy (*qiyās*) with Christ. Because of His mercy for mankind and through the wisdom, justice and power, He chose the 'form of a servant' to vanquish the devil. The author constructs his demonstration meticulously in defense of free will and the Christian view on salvation history. God's mercy and justice prevented him from using His might against His creation, because He preferred salvation to destruction, liberation to constraint and restoration to punishment. The parable shows how through the ingenuity of the divine disguise, Satan was put to shame, rather than meaninglessly destroyed. Peter of Bayt al-Ra's likes to stress the symmetry between Satan's and Christ's cleverness: 'He dealt craftily (*makara*) with Iblīs just as [Iblīs] had dealt craftily with Adam, and He proved the best of devisers (*khayr al-mākirīn*)'.[47] The words used are in fact Qur'anic, as ever so often in the *Kītāb al-burhān*, and serve as a possible defense against the accusation of picturing God as deceitful.[48]

It is this great insistence on that ingenuity, in the *Kītāb al-burhān* and in the other apologetic texts mentioned, which can explain how in the mind of an Arab Christian *sūra muḥkama* must apply to nothing other than 'the form of the servant' which Christ assumed. As said, I have not found these words quoted elsewhere. It seems nonetheless probable that Peter of Bayt al-Ra's found his inspiration in Q 47:20. In the parable

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[46] Cachia and Watt, *The Book of Demonstration*, vol. 1, pp. 133–134 (t), vol. 2, pp. 108–109 (tr) (My italics).

[47] Cachia and Watt, *The Book of Demonstration*, vol. 1, p. 127 (t), vol. 2 p. 103 (tr).

[48] Q 3:54, Q 8:30. Most of these elements are also to be found in more elaborate version of this parable in the *Debate of George the Monk*. Carali, *Le Christianisme et l'Islam*, pp. 125–128 (t); Nicoll, 'Account of a disputation', pp. 435–438 (tr). That the cleverness of God's strategy had already been demonstrated by Christians long before Islam is interesting to note; see Constans, 'The last temptation of Satan'.

quoted above he calls the strategy of the battle '*muḥkam*'.[49] Similarly he says that Christ teaches *iḥkām al-tawāḍu'*, 'the ingenuity of humility', in the struggle against evil, and he calls the creation of man in God's image '*iḥkām ṣūratihi*', 'the ingenuity of (the creation in) His image'.[50]

The interpretation of these Qur'anic words are a far cry from the interpretation of the *mufassirūn*. In their view Q 47:20 is an incontestable call for Jihād.[51] They read *muḥkama* as 'decisive', 'unambiguous', in accordance with their interpretation of the term in Q 3:7.[52] Perhaps the redactor of the *Legend* was specifically aiming at calling into question a verse that was widely regarded as a call for Jihād. He advances a reading which explains the Christian idea that mere overpowering of one's enemies does not constitute a true defeat.

*Christianity in the eyes of God—Christians in Muslim society*

Among the verses allegedly written by the monk, there are a number that deal not so much with aspects of the Christian faith as with the position of Christians in Muslim society. In many of the literary Christian-Muslim debates these verses play an important role. They were relevant to Christians inasmuch as they underlined their status as a protected community. A verse regularly adduced for this purpose is Q 29:46: '*do not dispute with the People of the Book except in the best way*'.[53] This could be employed in order to silence Muslims who made offensive remarks about Christianity and the Bible. Another example, which we have already come across in Ch. 4.3, is the oft-quoted Qur'anic saying '*you will surely find the nearest of them in love to you those who say: "we are Christians". And that is because there are amongst them priests and monks and they are not proud*' (Q 5:82).[54] By reciting this verse in debate Christians intended to play Muslims off against their own Scripture. They challenged them with the question why Christians would have to justify their beliefs to Muslims while the Qur'an praises them. But

[49] Cachia and Watt, *The Book of Demonstration*, vol. 1, p. 134 (t), vol. 2, p. 109 (tr.).

[50] Cachia and Watt, *The Book of Demonstration*, vol. 1, p. 33, p. 121 (t), vol. 2, p. 27, 98 (tr).

[51] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, part 26, pp. 34–35.

[52] For 'ambiguous' and 'clear-cut' verses of the Qur'an, see above: pp. 133–134.

[53] Dionysius bar Ṣalībī becomes offensive rather than defensive when quoting this verse. To him it means that he is free to point out contradictions in the Qur'an, since God does not allow Muslims to get angry in debate with the People of the Book: Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 101 (t), vol. 2, p. 93 (tr).

[54] For the importance of this verse, see Ch. 4, pp. 119–120.

there is more to this verse than one sees at first sight. The *Legend*, for its part, attempts to highlight the sharp contrast between, on the one hand, this commendation of Christians and, on the other hand, the strong reproof of other non-Muslims in the first half of the same verse, which reads: '*you will surely find that the strongest in enmity to those who believe are the Jews and those who are polytheists*'. The intent is to show that Christians are not considered polytheists in the Qurʾan. This served as ammunition against the frequent Muslim accusation that Christians are in fact polytheists because of their belief in the Trinity.[55]

In a similar vein one finds Q 49:14: '*The Bedouins say "we believe". Say: "you do not believe. The faith has not entered your hearts. Say 'we have become Muslims'".*' This verse is the focus of yet another point of controversy that touches on the status of Christians. Baḥīrā's succinct explanation of the verse is as follows: 'with that I mean that the true faith is the belief in Christ, and 'Islam' is the submission of the disciples of Christ'. There is no doubt that this explanation alludes to the exegetical discussions about the exact meaning of the term 'Islam', the difference between the concepts of 'Islam' and 'Belief', as found in the Qurʾan, and the challenge that it posed to *mufassirūn* and *mutakallimūn*. Several of the Christian apologists address the intransigent statement of Q 3:85: '*Whoso desires another religion than Islam it shall not be accepted of him*'.[56] In attempts to find a compelling response to this assertion, Christians searched the Qurʾan for something that contradicts it. One can infer from several sources that they took advantage of the fact that there is no uniformity in the use of the term 'Islam' in the Qurʾan. Pseudo-al-Kindi, for example, points out that Q 6:14, in which Muḥammad is called the first Muslim, contradicts the verses in which Abraham is called 'Muslim', while the *Legend*'s exegesis quoted above alludes to Q 3:52 in which the disciples say to Christ: 'we believe in God, witness our submission (*islām*)'.[57]

In the *Debate of Abraham of Tiberias*, the Christian monk raises this issue in a discussion about ritual purity, after one of the Muslims has

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[55] See for example the defense of Elias of Nisibis on this issue: 'Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn', *al-Mashriq* 20 (1922), pp. 117–122, as well as Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, pp. 79–80.

[56] See for example the Debate of Theodore and al-Maʾmūn and Paul of Antioch's *Letter to a Muslim Friend*; Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 75 (t), Khoury, Paul d'Antioche, p. 60* (t), p. 170 (tr).

[57] A similar focus on the inconsistent Qur'anic usage is to be found in the Mozarabic anti-Islamic tract *Liber denudationis*. See: Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 332–335 (ttr). For a more detailed discussion of Pseudo-al-Kindī's arguments see: Griffith, 'The Prophet Muḥammad', p. 127.

criticized the Christians for not performing ritual ablutions. When the monk asks which of the two is nobler, Islam or Belief, the Muslim replies that these things are the same. The monk, however, claims to read in the Qur'an that Belief is stronger than Islam and that Islam is something for people who are not truly capable of Belief. The first category of people have the inner purity of belief, whereas the second have to be satisfied with external purity by means of water.[58] In the *Debate of Theodore Abū Qurra with al-Ma'mūn* this issue also appears several times, and Theodore points out that the term 'Believers' stands for Christians in the Qur'an.[59] When referring to Q 49:14 he permits himself a little *taḥrīf* and says: 'The *Arabs* say: we believe' etc, instead of the Bedouins, *al-aʿrāb*, about whom the Qur'an speaks disparagingly more than once.[60]

Whereas Abraham of Tiberias focuses on the difference between *islām* and *īmān*, Theodore's debate and the *Legend* make the point that 'Belief' and 'Islam' essentially revolve around the same religious conviction, namely the belief in Christ. Theodore claims that Q 49:14 means that Muḥammad wanted the Arabs to convert to Islam in order for them to believe in 'God's Word and His Spirit'. Earlier on in the *Legend*, before the quotation of Q 49:14, the monk already declared that 'Muslim' means 'the one who surrenders to Christ'. Dionysius bar Ṣalībī also asserted that Christians ought to be regarded as Muslims, but goes even further and counts the Jews as well, since, as he says, *islām* is often defined by Muslim scholars as submission to God and abstaining from sinning and bad speech. This would mean that all righteous people are Muslims.[61] A sign that this exegetical theme was the result of real exchanges between Muslims and Christians, not just arguments for 'internal consumption', is found in the *Sīra*, which reveals the author's awareness of such arguments. The Christians from Najrān are depicted by Ibn Hishām as stubbornly replying to the Prophet's call to convert:

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[58] Marcuzzo, *Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 432–433 (ttr). The quotations from the Qur'an which are given as prooftext here are not correct. See the comments of the editor on p. 432, n. 16.

[59] Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, pp. 75–76, p. 85, pp. 108–109 (t). It is interesting that Donner has attempted to show on the basis of early Muslim and non-Muslim sources that there was a historical group of *mu'minūn*, 'believers', around Muḥammad who believed in God and the Last Day, but who submitted to a divine Law that was not necessarily the Qur'an; Donner, 'From Believers to Muslims'.

[60] Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 109 (t). For a more detailed discussion of the issue in this disputation, see Griffith, 'The Qur'ān in Arab Christian texts', pp. 230–232.

[61] Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 4, pp. 104–105 (t), vol. 2, p. 4, pp. 95–96 (tr).

'we were already Muslims before you' (i.e. 'we have submitted before you').[62]

Comparing these different examples, we can determine that there were two different escape routes available in the face of the claim that '*whoso desires another religion than Islam it shall not be accepted of him*'. On the one hand Christians tried to argue that the Qur'an defines Islam so broadly that more 'believers' fit under the umbrella of 'Islam' than only those believing in the prophethood of Muḥammad. On the other hand, others argued that the Qur'an sanctions other beliefs alongside Islam, so that even when one insists on the narrow definition of Islam one still cannot argue that others are to be condemned as 'unbelievers'.[63] Whereas in the case of Q 49:14 Baḥīrā's explanation tends towards the former idea, I presume that the quotations in the *Legend* of Q 109 ('…*You have your religion and I have mine*') and Q 49:13 ('…*the noblest of you with God is the most pious of you*') are meant to place emphasis on the latter.

*Concluding comments*

The examples of the *Legend*'s quotations and exegesis of the Qur'an show that the redactor of A2 tried in many different ways to find support in the Qur'an for Christian doctrine. His verses are meant to show first of all that the Qur'an is authored by a Christian, and secondly, that Muslim polemic against Christian doctrine is not justified. An example such as the '*ṣūra muḥkama*' verse shows that some of the verses chosen were not obvious choices: in this case one could certainly agree with Ibn Hishām that Christian apologists scavenged the Qur'an for *āyāt mutashābihāt*, 'ambiguous verses'. One has to realize, however, that such quotations are presented jointly with verses that quite plainly express appreciation for the Christian faith. Those more straightforward verses are to be considered the key to the meaning of other passages in the Qur'an; they form the *carte blanche* to further decipher its text and undermine the authority of the *mufassirūn*.

And yet many would say that it is illogical and unconvincing to argue on the basis of a text which one does not consider as revealed.

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[62] Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, p. 403.

[63] For an exhaustive treatment of this issue see: Khoury, 'Exégèse chrétienne du Coran', pp. 61–75. It is interesting to note that among Arabic-speaking Jews the same prooftexts were used to show that it was not necessary for them to convert to Islam. See the twelfth-century Jewish apology *Bustān al-'uqūl* by Nathanael ibn Fayyūmī: Levine, *The Bustan al-Ukul*, p. 66, p. 69 (t), p. 105, p. 109 (tr).

It presents the same ambiguity as the phenomenon of Jews arguing from the New Testament and Christians from the Talmud, as well as Muslims arguing from the Bible while at the same time upholding the idea of *taḥrīf*. However, as a final comment on the Christian apologetic approach to the Qur'an, we may draw attention to the fact that some of the Christian apologists did not fail to supply a justification for their exegetical efforts: the Qur'an was meant to be preached solely and specifically to the *ummiyyūn*, i.e. those who were not acquainted yet with the Scriptures. They needed to be introduced to the faith in a basic unsophisticated manner. This can explain why some Christian ideas appear only in a veiled manner in the Qur'an, said Patriarch Timothy to al-Mahdī.[64] This can also explain why the Christian layer ultimately has primacy over other parts of the Qur'an. Nevertheless, this does not yet answer the question *by whom* the Qur'an was created in order that it be preached to the *ummiyyūn*. Patriarch Timothy declines to answer the question and says: 'It is not my business to decide whether it is from God or not'.[65] A number of apologists refer explicitly to the mission of Baḥīrā, but these are remarkably few; most others do not address the question at all.[66] It would be interesting to pose the question to the West-Syrian patriarch Dionysius bar Ṣalībī for example. He quotes from the Qur'an extensively in support of his own religious beliefs, but when describing Muḥammad's adolescence he only mentions his alleged contact with Jews, not with Christians. Whether the monk Baḥīrā is in the minds of these authors more often than in their writings unfortunately cannot be determined.

[64] Mingana, 'Timothy's Apology', p. 140 (t), p. 68 (tr).
[65] Mingana, 'Timothy's Apology', p. 109 (t), p. 36 (tr).
[66] See below Ch. 6.

CHAPTER SIX

# THE LEGEND OUTSIDE THE *LEGEND*

## *Baḥīrā the Source*

> *We know indeed that they say: 'It is a man who teaches him.' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear*
>
> *Q 16:103*
>
> *They say, 'Tales of the ancients that he has had written down; they are recited to him at dawn and in the evening'*
>
> *Q 25:5*

Many of the Islamic tales about Baḥīrā have been reviewed in Chapter Two. For obvious reasons, none of these traditions describe Baḥīrā as having had extensive conversations with Muḥammad about religion. The monk is only an instrument used to confirm Muḥammad's prophethood; the encounter is the enactment of Christian recognition of the truth of Islam. The suggestion that Baḥīrā was in fact Muḥammad's teacher, who taught him about God, about His prophets and about the destiny of humankind, runs counter to Islam's self-image as the faith founded on the unmediated revelation of God's Word to the 'Seal of all Prophets'. The possibility that Muḥammad became Baḥīrā's pupil after this miraculous encounter is precluded by the traditions themselves, because it is stated that the young prophet-to-be fled back home from Syria.[1]

This does not alter the fact that Muslim scholars wanted to defend themselves against the allegation that the monk had secretly been the Prophet's teacher. A defensive voice is found, for example, in Ibn Taymiyya's all-encompassing refutation of Christianity entitled *al-Jawāb*

[1] See above: Ch. 2, pp. 38–40.

*al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*. A fierce defender of Sunnī Islam, Ibn Taymiyya draws attention to Baḥīrā's confirmation of Muḥammad's prophethood, but also stresses that Muḥammad was not capable of speaking with non-Arabs and that during his two trips to Syria his company never left him alone.[2] An example of a less argumentative defense against the accusation can be found in hadīth. In Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* there is the following tradition:

> Abū Maʿmar—ʿAbd al-Wārith—ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz—Anas:
>
> There was a Christian man who embraced Islām and read [sūrat] al-Baqara and Āl-ʿImrān and he used to write for the Prophet. Later he reverted to Christianity and he used to say, 'Muḥammad knows nothing except what I have written for him'. Then God caused him to die and the people buried him but in the morning they found that the earth had thrown out his body. They said: 'This is the deed of Muḥammad and his Companions. They have opened the grave of our companion and took his body out because he ran away from them'. They dug a deeper grave for him, but in the morning they again found that the earth had thrown the body out. They said 'This is a deed of Muḥammad and his Companions. They dug the grave of our companion and threw his body out because he ran away from them'. So they dug a grave for him as deep as they could, but in the morning they found that the earth had thrown the body out. Then they believed that what had befallen him, had not been done by a human, and they threw him away.[3]

The accusation that Muḥammad received his teachings from a source other than God is in all likelihood as old as Islam itself, since the Qur'an already alludes to it. The most crucial verses in this respect are Q 16:103 and Q 25:5, quoted above. The former is not only reflecting the accusation but also a defense against it. But that defense affirms the existence of a person to whom Muḥammad's opponents apparently referred; someone with 'a foreign tongue'. According to Muslim tradition, the occasion of revelation of this verse was indeed the actual occurrence of this accusation. The explanation most often given was that the person alluded to had been a slave in Mecca or a simple craftsman, sometimes also said to be a Christian or a Jew. Gilliot has shown that a long list of can be drawn up of the names of this per-

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[2] Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 141; Michel, *A Muslim Theologian's response*, pp. 174–175 (tr).

[3] Al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol 4, pp. 523–524. This ḥadīth bears a curious resemblance to a story in John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow* about a certain monk Thomas from Apamea. When people tried to bury a woman on top of him, the earth rejected his corpse three times; J. Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow*, p. 71 (tr).

son appearing in *tafsīr*, among whom feature Balʿām, Yusr, Jabr, Yaʿīsh and Yasār Abū Fukayha.[4] They were all described as belonging to a low social class. Some of them were said to have been secret believers in the Prophet, while their masters were pagan opponents of the Prophet's mission. The sense that a wise learned Christian hides behind this accusation in the Qurʾan is evidently counteracted in *tafsīr*.[5]

It is interesting to see that in one of the oldest surviving Muslim-Christian debates, the *Correspondence of Leo III and ʿUmar II*, the verse Q 16:103 appears in the discussion.[6] It is the Caliph who brings it up in defense of Muḥammad's revelation rather than his opponent presenting it as an argument against it. Although we do not have the exact words of Leo in the passage concerned, we read in ʿUmar's response:

> The pagans of [Muḥammad's] own people had already said, when God had sent him to them: "This man is taught by a man.—But the tongue of the man they allude to is a foreign tongue, while this preaching is pure, clear Arabic." And God said to Muḥammad: "Before this, you did not recite any Scripture, nor did you write any with your right hand. And so the liars are in doubt. On the contrary, these are clear signs (verses) in the hearts of those to whom knowledge has been given, and no one but the wrongdoers refuses our signs."[7]

The second quotation from the Qurʾan in this passage is Q 29:48–49. Below we will see that to some anti-Muslim polemicists this verse did not mean at all what ʿUmar thought it said. But to what argument is ʿUmar responding exactly? Apparently, his opponent has suggested that it was 'Yās and Nasṭūr' who had taught the Prophet what he gave to his people.[8] This reminds the reader of Baḥīrā and Nasṭūr who recognized Muḥammad, according to the *Sīra*, although it is of course not clear why the former would be called Yās.[9] The Caliph then gives

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[4] Gilliot, 'Les «informateurs» juifs et chrétiens', summarized in *id*, 'Muḥammad, le Coran et les «constraintes de l'histoire»', pp. 19–25 and *id*, 'Informants'.

[5] Ibn Taymiyya therefore uses the exegesis as a defense against the accusation that Muhammad had informants: Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Ǧawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, part 4, pp. 27–28.

[6] See above, p. 14, for this correspondence.

[7] Gaudeul, 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar', p. 154 (tr); Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulmane anonyme', p. 32 (t).

[8] Gaudeul, 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar', p. 154 (tr); Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulmane anonyme', p. 32 (t). This does not feature in the surviving Armenian or Latin versions of Leo's Letter.

[9] There is no good explanation of the name 'Yās'; it vaguely resembles some of the names mentioned above of the 'foreign tongue' to which Muḥammad's opponents

a brilliantly simple reply in which he refutes the idea of these two men having influenced Muḥammad: 'Both of them drank wine, faced the East (to pray), venerated the cross, the eucharist and baptism, refused circumcision, and used to eat pork. Did our Prophet follow any of their teaching?'[10] A more elaborate version of the same argument is to be found in the *Letter of Hārūn al-Rashīd to Constantine VI.*[11]

Needless to say, that 'Umar's pointed replies were not the end of the discussion. To him Q 16:103 and Q 29:48–49 were God's refutations of Muḥammad's opponents, but his opponents kept on repeating and refining their arguments.[12] It is interesting to see, for example, how Q 16:103 becomes the centre of an argument against the inimitability of the Qur'an. In the correspondence between the two scholars Ibn al-Munajjim and his Christian friend Qusṭa ibn Lūqā (probably written between 862 and 872) this verse occurs in the debate about *iʿjāz*. In the *kalām*-treatises of the 'Proofs of Prophethood' it was argued that the miracle of the Qur'an need not be demonstrated on the basis of later investigations into the particularities and esthetics of its language and style, but rather on the basis of the fact that when the Prophet challenged the people in his environment to produce something similar, no one even tried. From this the *mutakallimūn* deduced that the Qur'an's inimitability was self-evident. Ibn al-Munajjim focuses even more closely on the actual prophetic challenge, while presenting his Christian friend with a psychological 'Proof of Prophethood'. He argues that on the basis of his remarkable achievements during his lifetime it is certain that Muḥammad had an extraordinary intelligence. Someone who was so smart would never have voiced a challenge to his opponents if he were not absolutely sure that he was right. Muḥammad must therefore have had the unshakable—supernatural—conviction that no one could imitate his Scripture. And indeed, there was no one who took up the challenge, he asserts. But this position drew an objection from Qusṭa. How can one say that no one challenged the Prophet if they even said 'it is only a mortal who is teaching him'? The defense against that claim, which, as we have seen, is given in the same Qur'anic

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alluded, but since none of these ever appear in Muslim-Christian disputations, it seems unlikely to me that one of these men is meant. It is most likely to be a scribal error.

[10] Gaudeul, 'The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar', p. 154 (tr); Sourdel, 'Un pamphlet musulmane anonyme', p. 32 (t).

[11] For the relevant passage, see: Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasā'il al-'Arab*, vol. 3, p. 232.

[12] The controversial verse 16:103 is also echoed in the Mozarabic *Liber denudationis*; see below: p. 167, n. 51.

passage, fails to convince Qusṭa. According to him these words are proof against prophethood rather than proof of his prophethood.[13] He does not elaborate, but presumably he considers the mere fact that the Qur'an reminded the Arabs of the words of some foreign man as clear enough proof of the fact that its *iʿjāz* was challenged at the time.

There are some similarities between Qusṭa ibn Lūqā's argumentation and that found in a famous attack on the Prophet written by a 'freethinker' (*zindīq*).[14] A few notorious 'freethinkers' in Medieval Islam disputed the very existence of prophethood and thus placed themselves entirely outside the community of believers. If prophets teach us what we can infer through reason, they argued, then why do we need prophets? And if they teach something contrary to reason, they added, how could we accept them trying to alter to alter the reason which God has given us? Why would God need to single out certain individuals to teach humankind about Him, rather than endow all with the same reason? Such were the questions posed by Ibn al-Rāwandī (ninth c.), Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (d. c. 864), Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzi (d. 925) and the mysterious group of the *Barāhima* ('Brahmans'), as we find them in the works of later Muslim apologists and heresiographers who tried to refute their views. How the issue of Muḥammad's access to Biblical knowledge played a role in the thinking of someone who accepted nothing of the 'revealed religions' but nevertheless mingled in the disputes of their respective apologists, can be reconstructed from the fragments of the *Kitāb al-zumurrud*. The work survives only in fragments and summaries in works of Muslim theologians who tried to refute it, notably the *Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* of the Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* al-Muʾayyad fī l-Dīn Hibat Allāh ibn Abī ʿImrān al-Shirāzī,[15] al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* and ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Tathbīt dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*. The book is most often said to be written by Ibn al-Rāwandī, although Abū ʿĪsā l-Warrāq is also mentioned as the author by ʿAbd al-Jabbār. Al-Māturīdi, while summarizing the dispute which the book contains, attributes the arguments in favor

[13] Samir and Nwyia, 'Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne', p. 642, p. 644 (t), p. 643, p. 645 (tr).

[14] The Persian term *zindīq*, plural *zanādiqa*, was used to refer to Manicheans, but in early Islam it also acquired the meaning of renegade or unbeliever. Sarah Stroumsa gave the group of extreme rationalists who attacked Islam and the concept of prophethood the appropriate label 'freethinker' in her extensive study *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*.

[15] The refutation of the *Kitāb al-zumurrud* contained in the *Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* was taken by al-Muʾayyad fī l-Dīn from another, unknown, Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*. It has been edited, translated and discussed in: Kraus, 'Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte'.

of prophecy to Ibn al-Rawāndī and those against it to Abū ʿĪsā.[16] The question of Muḥammad's sources appears in the middle of a discussion about Jews and Christians who indirectly acknowledged Muḥammad's prophethood, when he challenged them publicly. According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet exhorted the Jews to wish for their own death, if they were so sure that he was not a prophet. The Jews did not and the conclusion was that they did not dare to do so. Similarly, Muḥammad told the Christians of Najrān to acknowledge that he was a prophet foretold in their Scriptures and to sign a treaty with him. When they refused, he challenged them by saying that God would curse the party that was in the wrong (a custom called *mubāhala*).[17] At that point the Christians gave in and accepted the terms of the treaty, hence admitting that God may well be on Muḥammad's side. Muslim *mutakallimūn* used these events to show that even some people who did not convert nevertheless admitted that Muḥammad was a prophet and that this was in all likelihood on account of them having found prophecies about his appearance in their Bible books. And likewise in the *Kītāb al-zumurrud*, the opponent of the 'freethinker' claims that these events not only prove Muḥammad's prophethood, but also that of the Biblical prophets, because their prophecies were fulfilled in Muḥammad. To deny the very existence of prophets is therefore absurd, he claims. But the anti-Muslim polemicist refutes this point in two different ways. First of all, it is not impossible that some of the Biblical prophets have truly predicted the coming of Muḥammad, but that is nothing more than looking into the future, which astrologers can do as well. Secondly, it is possible that Muḥammad knew from the Bible what kind of predictions it contained and that he acted purposely in such a way as to 'fulfill' them. The latter point is somewhat concealed by the allusive rendering of the debate, but this is how one presumably has to understand the function of the quotation in the middle of this argument of Q 29:48: 'And thou wast not (able) to recite a Book before this'.[18] This verse is quoted in anticipation of the Muslim claim that as Muḥammad

[16] These issues are discussed elaborately in Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*, pp. 37–86.

[17] See for this Schmucker, 'Die Christliche Minderheit von Naǧrān', pp. 183–250.

[18] Quoted from Yusuf Ali's translation, with the added 'able', which reflects the traditional interpretation of the verse as a sign of Muḥammad's illiteracy and ignorance of the Bible. This is obviously how it functions also in this debate. The verse itself somewhat less specific: *wa-mā kunta tatlū min qablihi min al-kitāb*: 'You have not recited a book before'.

was illiterate he could not have searched the Bible for predictions that he could subsequently have decided to fulfill. Even if he was illiterate, the freethinker argues, Muḥammad could have heard Biblical stories and memorized them, because 'memorization takes the place of a book'.[19] The striking point of this argument is that with this attack on Muḥammad's prophethood, the prophethood of the earlier prophets is called into question as well. Their predictions are not really prophecies, it was suggested, nor is the one who fulfilled them really a prophet.

The reply, in its turn, is quite sharp-witted: memorization of texts is not on the basis of dictation but by means of recitation and for recitation a book is needed.[20] Moreover, Muḥammad did not grow up in isolation. He was part of a community. People would have noticed it if he had been studying or memorizing, and it would have been very easy for them to refute his revelation on that ground.

This discussion gives us an idea of the intricacy of the debate between the Muslim *mutakallimūn* and their opponents about Muḥammad's access to religious sources prior to the beginning of his mission. Unfortunately we do not know what the freethinker would have replied to al-Māturīdī's argument that if Muḥammad had been studying the Holy Books, before his call, people would have known about it.

The examples discussed above show clearly how such discussions among the *mutakallimūn*, who were thoroughly aware of the arguments that were circulating in the different religious communities, focused on hypothetical situations during the Prophet's early life. It is important to note that before these intense discussions evolved, Christians

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[19] *Inna l-ḥifẓ yaqūmu maqām al-kitāb*; such was the argument cited by al-Māturīdī: *Kītāb al-tawḥīd*, p. 196). In the *Majālis al-Muʾayyadiyya* (see: Kraus, 'Beiträge zur islamischen Ketzergeschichte', p. 103 (t), p. 114 (tr)) it remains unclear why this verse is quoted, and its passage can only be understood by means of comparison with al-Māturīdī. One can also read the argument without taking the context of the argument about the *mubāhala* into consideration and interpret it as a more general claim that Muḥammad had access to sources, as Thomas does (Thomas, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam*, p. 28: 'the fact that the Prophet could not read does not mean that he did not remember stories he had heard') or as an argument against Muḥammad's supposed miraculous knowledge of things from the past, as Stroumsa does (Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam*, p. 64: 'the fact that he was able to recount events from the past does not prove that he was a prophet. [He could have read about those events in the Bible] and, if he was illiterate, he could still have had the Bible read to him'; see also: Stroumsa, 'The Blinding Emerald', p. 174).

[20] This is how I interpreted the words *wa-aḥāla li-anna l-ḥifẓ yakūnu ʿan al-tilāwa wa-mā bi-ilqāʾ ʿalayhi fa-huwa ʿan kitāb yuqraʾu* which follow the remark that memory can take the place of a book: al-Māturīdī *Kītāb al-tawḥīd*, p. 196.

in the Near East had already developed their own traditions about Muḥammad's teachers, which had more substance than the hypothetical 'foreign tongue' or 'recited Book' that feature in the interreligious *kalām*. In Chapter Two I have mentioned that in one of the earliest Christian-Muslim disputations, the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē*, the monk asserts that Muḥammad knew the term 'God's Word and His Spirit' from the Gospel of Luke. He does not specify how Muḥammad would have become acquainted with the Bible. However, in the continuation of this discussion about the three hypostases of God, the Arab asks why Muḥammad called his people to the worship of the One God only. At this stage the monk brings up the person whom he apparently believes to be the Prophet's instructor:

> Know, o man, that when a child is born, because it has no solid senses yet which can take in solid food, they feed it milk for two years, and after that they give it bread to eat, likewise Muḥammad, because he was aware of your childishness and the paucity of your knowledge, has first made the One True God known to you, a teaching which he had received from Sergius Baḥīrā. Because you were still children in knowledge, he did not teach you about the mystery of the Trinity, lest you erred [by worshiping] a large number of Gods, because you might have said: 'if Muḥammad proclaims three, we will make seven others, because when there will be ten, they will become even more powerful.' And you would have pursued idolatry, just as before.[21]

This is the oldest surviving text to make mention of Sergius Baḥīrā. As one can see, he appears as the source of the Prophet's monotheism. The passage quoted suggests that the Prophet did know that this was a simplified version of the truth, and that he was aware of the triune nature of God. This idea of Islam being an adapted version of the truth is quite common in Eastern Christian apologetic texts. The debate of Timothy with al-Mahdī gives expression to the same idea in very similar terms.[22]

A more extensive Eastern-Christian account of Muḥammad's life and his contact with Christians is to be found in the *Apology of al-Kindī*.[23] It refutes the claims of Islam in the greatest detail and often does so by using Muslim sources, for example ḥadīth. Below the surface of its outright, almost violent, rejection of Islam, there are some intricate arguments which show that the author was not just trying to radically dis-

[21] MS Diyarbakir 95, fol. 5a.
[22] Mingana, 'Timothy's Apology', p. 140 (t), p. 68 (tr); and see above Ch. 5, p. 149.
[23] See also above: Ch. 1, p. 23 and n. 39, for this text.

miss but also to carefully refute Islam. Since slightly diverging versions of the text circulated in the different Eastern Christian communities, it is to be regretted that no critical edition has as yet appeared.[24] Nevertheless, a thorough reading of the different versions has been undertaken by Landron. She confirms the opinion of Mingana and Graf who believed the text to have originated in an East-Syrian milieu and adds a number of decisive arguments for this.[25] When it comes to the question of Sergius, the *Apology of al-Kindī* sketches a picture of events remarkably similar to those of the *Legend*.[26] Sergius is not a heretic who sets out to corrupt the Arabs, but rather a monk who has sinned but repented and began to proselytize in order to make up for what he had done wrong.[27] It is not made clear of what his sin consisted of, but as an attempt to regain the confidence of his fellows, he sets off to the Tihāma to convert the pagans and the Jews, beginning with the youngster Muḥammad. He was successful in converting him to East-Syrian Christianity and if it had not been for his untimely death his mission would have been accomplished.[28] The book which Muḥammad received from Sergius was 'in the spirit of the Gospel'.[29] Only after the Prophet's death, when the community was in turmoil, did the Jews begin to exert their influence and to present bits of text that were written according to their liking.

Pseudo-al-Kindī continues with an account of the scheming of these Jews. The polemicist concentrates on three things attested by Islamic sources: the apostasy (*ridda*) after the death of the Prophet, the rivalry between ʿAlī and Abū Bakr, and the collection of the Qurʾan. During this period the influence of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām and Kaʿb al-Aḥbār

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[24] That is to say: of the Arabic original (it has been announced in Farina and Ciaramella, 'Per una edizione critica della Apologia'). The Latin version has recently appeared in a critical edition: González Muñoz, *Exposición y refutación del Islam*.

[25] Landron, *Attitudes Nestoriennes*, pp. 82–83. For a more detailed discussion of the manuscript tradition, see: Farina and Ciaramella, 'Per una edizione critica'.

[26] For Graf this was reason to assume that the *Legend* was an elaboration of the basic story in the *Apology of al-Kindī*, but nothing compels us to assume such a chronology; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, pp. 148–149.

[27] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 76: *aḥdatha ḥadathan ankarahu ʿalayhi aṣḥābuhu fa-ḥaramūhu wa-akhrajūhu wa-qaṭaʿūhu ʿan al-dukhūl ilā l-kanīsa wa-amtanaʿū min kalāmihi wa-mukhāṭabatihi ʿalā mā jarat bihi l-ʿāda minhum fī mithl hādhā l-ḍarb fa-nadima ʿalā mā kāna minhu fa-arāda an yafʿala fiʿlan yakūnu lahu tamḥīṣ ʿan dhanbihi wa-ḥujja ʿinda aṣḥābihi l-Naṣārā.*

[28] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 77: *fa-lammā qawiya l-amr fī l-Naṣrāniyya wa-kāda yatimmu tuwuffiya Nastūriyūs hādhā.*

[29] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 78: *al-kitāb alladhī dafaʿahu ilayhi ṣāḥibuhu ʿalā maʿnā l-injīl*, p. 79: *al-nuskha allatī kānat muḥiḍḍa ʿalā maʿnā l-injīl.*

was as follows: they approached ʿAlī, offering to teach him in the way his master had been taught by a Christian, so that he could be a Prophet, too, and would gain a higher status than Abū Bakr. Although this secret bond was soon discovered, the two Jews managed to insert some of their views into the Evangelic scripture of Sergius.[30] As a consequence of the changes made by ʿAlī, conflicting texts began to circulate. This called for an extensive editing process, which Pseudo-al-Kindī describes in detail with references to Islamic tradition. Although the author's insinuations seem rather fantastic, he is in fact alluding to the debates between Shiis and Sunnis, who have accused each other of tampering with the Qur'anic text.[31]

Returning to Sergius, it has to be recognized that he is spared Pseudo-al-Kindī's usual harshness, because he taught Muḥammad about Christianity and gave him a Gospel-like book.[32]

One aspect of the text which still deserves to be mentioned, however, is the fact that Sergius is said to have changed his name to 'Nestorius'. This claim is reminiscent of the Islamic tradition, in which Nasṭūr is one of the monks who recognized Muḥammad as a Prophet. Later on in the *Apology of al-Kindī* there is a reference in passing to monks in Muḥammad's environment. In a discussion about martyrdom, Pseudo-al-Kindī tries to make clear that only Christian communities appear to be worthy of the blessing of the relics of martyrs. He contrasts the many Christian countries where holy men and relics heal people with the desert of Arabia where no one can benefit from such wonders, because no Christian has gone there except Sergius, known as Nestorius, and John, known as Baḥīrā.[33]

The reason for giving these double names corresponds to what I have said earlier on about the invention of the name Sergius for the *Legend*.[34] A Christian author could not possibly consider the Nasṭūr and Baḥīrā from Islamic tradition as proper names and, hence, they had to be supplied with the Christian name, too. The fact that Baḥīrā is not called Sergius by Pseudo-al-Kindī is, of course, surprising.

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[30] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 79–84; Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 181–192 (tr).

[31] See Modaressi, 'Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur'an'; Brunner, 'La Question de la Falsification'.

[32] Once the *Apology of al-Kindī* was translated into the Latin, it was interpreted in a much more negative light. See the next section.

[33] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 120; Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, p. 231 (tr).

[34] See above, p. 58.

It is also worth drawing attention to a passage in al-Hāshimī's part of the *Apology*, which is clearly a forgery by the Christian author who wants to show Islam is inferior to Christianity.[35] In this 'invitation to Islam' Pseudo-al-Kindī also tries to show Muḥammad's contact with Christians during his lifetime by describing how Muḥammad met regularly with monks in Syria, with whom he established a friendship and spent a long time discussing during his frequent visits. This is then, again, the background for the revelation of Q 5:82.[36]

The *Apology of al-Kindī* has had a tremendous impact on the Medieval European polemic against Islam. As will be discussed in the next section, this text was responsible for many of the polemical anecdotes about Sergius' influence on the Prophet that circulated in Europe. By contrast, if we look at the Eastern Christian writings about Islam, there are not many works which go into detail about the alleged role of Sergius Baḥīrā in the genesis of Islam. One of those that does is the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* ('The Book of the Rolls'), but this work will be discussed in the next section.

Many centuries after the *Apology of al-Kindī*, another story was told about Muḥammad's instruction by a monk. It is included in a popular Christian Arabic apologetic text, the *Debate of George the Monk with Three Muslims in the year 1217*.[37] The old monk, who refutes three Muslims in this debate, gives his own view of the rise of Islam:

> Muḥammad was a Bedouin camel driver who used to visit Jerusalem. He stayed with a Christian who belonged to the tradition of Nestorius. The name of the monk was Baḥīrā. When that man inquired about his confession and his religion he found out that he was from the nation that does not know God, the nation of Ishmael. They used to worship an idol called Akbar and their prayers before him were poems on the subject of lust and desire, which they used to write on tablets and which they would hang above the idol. They prayed to them and called them 'the suspended seven'. When Baḥīrā learnt that he was from that tribe he sympathized with him, out of affection and friendship. And [so] he acquainted him with the knowledge of God and recited to him sections from the Gospel, the Torah and the Psalms. And when

[35] See above p. 23, n. 39.

[36] Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, p. 6; Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, p. 90 (tr). For the importance of the verse Q 5:82, see above: Ch. 4, pp. 113–121.

[37] This is a apology of Melkite origin that has known an immense popularity; see Samir, 'Auteurs arabes chrétiens du XIIIe siècle'.

> [Muḥammad] went back to his country he condemned them, saying: 'you are in obvious error and your worship is vain, harmful and of no avail.'[38]

Muḥammad then began to teach them about God and His promise of paradise for the faithful. The Arabs were reluctant to join this new faith and said that they feared their God Akbar. Muḥammad nevertheless wins them over when he tells them 'worship God and venerate Akbar'.[39] With this compromise several tribes converted collectively. A problem that Muḥammad had to face with this new community was that they wanted to intermarry with closely related family members. When the Prophet decided to write to his 'guru' for advice on this issue, he told him to prohibit it, and with some difficulty Muḥammad imposed some limitations on incestuous marriages. This episode is the second and last time that Baḥīrā features in George the Monk's description of early Islam. After that Muḥammad's mission is marked by warfare and polygamy.

Throughout this *Debate of George the Monk*, one notices that its author was unforgiving in his judgment of Muḥammad and the Arabs. They are people who are so obsessed with the material world that they cannot grasp anything spiritual. The only reason why the tribes joined Muḥammad's cause is because they were promised a wonderful afterlife and because they were allowed to continue their worship of their idol Akbar. When looking at the figure of Baḥīrā and the question of his influence on Muḥammad, some interesting aspects of his role can be noted. The monk teaches Muḥammad about God and the Scriptures out of friendship and compassion. Even when the Arabs fail to grasp the good news in its proper form, the monk still advises Muḥammad to preach decency. This is definitely a positive role; the text suggests that the monk is in no way responsible for Islam in its final form. The striking element in all of this is that the monk was a 'Nestorian'. In no way does the Melkite author suggest that therefore Baḥīrā must have taught Muḥammad unorthodox doctrines.

This is interesting, because this detail also reflects back on the *Apology of al-Kindī*. As I already indicated, the *Apology* could well have originated in an East-Syrian milieu. But because the *Debate of George the Monk* alerts us to the fact that a positive view on a 'Nestorian' can also come from elsewhere, it has to be noted that in the case of the *Apology of al-Kindī*,

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[38] Carali, *Le Christianisme et l'Islam*, pp. 51–52 (t).

[39] For this idea, see ES below: p. 301, n. 104 and the literature cited there.

the fact that Muḥammad's instructor is a 'Nestorian' and at the same time a well-intentioned man is no additional argument for the East-Syrian origin of the *Apology*. We may surmise that to the author of the *Debate of George the Monk* the confessional background of Baḥīrā was a historical fact which he knew through the tradition reflected in the *Apology of al-Kindī* and which he adopted without further questioning. Another interesting point to note is that there is no involvement of Jews. The text explains Islam purely from the point of view of its Christian beginnings and the influence of the uncivilized Arabs on its message.

This already brings us to the end of the Eastern Christian writings that describe the role of the monk. Obviously, there are references in passing to the figure of Baḥīrā. For example that Bar Hebraeus in his Arabic chronicle relates the story of the monk's miraculous recognition of Muḥammad as a young boy and the prediction of a grand future.[40] Syriac chroniclers who described the beginning of Islam sometimes mentioned that Muḥammad as a young man had traveled regularly to Syria and Palestine, but when they mention his encounters there the reference is most often to the Jews, from whom he allegedly learnt about the existence of the One God.[41] These accounts are too brief for us to understand whether, for example, the Jewish influence on Muḥammad was considered more profound than the Christian one (assuming that these chroniclers were, as such, familiar with the stories about the monk) or whether the issue was just too sensitive to address.

If we look outside the world of Syriac and Christian-Arabic apologetics vis-à-vis Islam, there are very few Christian writings which follow the line of thought that we have come across in the texts discussed in the above. They either describe Baḥīrā as nothing other than the fount of Muḥammad's Christian beliefs, or specifically portray him as a benevolent preacher who tried to bring Muḥammad into the fold. It is interesting to note, for example, that among the many Armenian texts which dismiss the entire religion of Islam as the product of an evil Christian heretic, there is also one historian who explains the error of Islam as having come into being only after Muḥammad had abandoned his Christian teacher. The author in question, Mkhitar of Ani, writing in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, saw Baḥīrā (Bkhira) simply as a teacher, who lived in Sinai and instructed Muḥammad in the Christian Scriptures. Muḥammad, at a certain

[40] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Ta'rīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, p. 94.
[41] See above: Ch. 1, p. 33 and n. 71.

point, deserted his master and learned some rites and doctrines from a Jewish merchant. In the end he was dissatisfied with both faiths and began his own heresy: 'And [Muḥammad] began of his own invention to proclaim a new faith, opposed to the truth and the false'.[42] There is no doubt that the former refers to the teaching by the Christian, the latter by the Jew. From then on the new religion became pure idolatry, inspired by demons. An intriguing aspect of Mkhitar's description of the origin of Islam is that he includes the 'Childhood of Jesus' in the list of Scriptures that Baḥīrā taught 'Mahmet'. This undoubtedly refers to the Arabic Infancy Gospel, which recounts miracles of Christ which the Qur'an contains as well, but which had not been transmitted among the canonical books of the New Testament.[43]

There is also one example of a Greek work which describes the positive role of Baḥīrā: the *Confutatio Agareni* by Bartholomew of Edessa. There is no mention of this author in the sources, but on internal grounds Todt has convincingly dated the text to the late twelfth century.[44] Just as Mkhitar of Ani's work is an exception among Armenian works about Islam in the way it describes the Christian influence on Muḥammad, likewise Bartholomew is an exception to the rule within the Byzantine traditions. This can be explained on the basis of the author's comments about his sources. He calls himself 'a monk from Edessa' and is familiar with both Islamic and Arab Christian lore about the life of the Prophet. His acquaintance with the name Baḥīrā ('Pakhura' in his spelling) presumably comes from Syrian Christians or from Muslims; in Greek sources he would not have found the name. Similar to the *Debate of George the Monk*, the *Confutatio Agareni* speaks of Baḥīrā as a 'Nestorian', and even though there is no reason to assume that Bartholomew sympathizes with the East-Syrian Christians, he nevertheless describes Pakhura's teachings and intentions as praiseworthy. As Bartholomew explains it, Pakhura lived on a mountain near Mecca

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[42] Thomson, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam', p. 846. The whole section on the origin of Islam is translated on pp. 846–853.

[43] One of the sources of this part of Mkhitar of Ani's work is a Karshūnī document that was translated into Armenian, and was used also in other Armenian writings about Islam. The text is presented at the end of the first part of Mkhitar's *History* in the edition by Patkanian, *Melchitar Anetsvo patmutyan*, part I, Appendix; I have not been able to get access to this work. From the passage cited by Thomson, we can see that the text must be closely related to the *Legend*. It contains the anecdote about the cow bringing the Qur'an on her horn, in wording very similar to the *Legend*: Thomson, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam', p. 853.

[44] Todt, *Bartholomaios von Edessa*, pp. xxxix–xlvi.

and taught Muḥammad for seven years. He tried to convert him to the faith and have him baptized. But as time went on, he decided instead to turn a blind eye to Muḥammad's false claims. The explanation for this decision forms a remarkable parallel with the *Legend*. It is his foreknowledge of the Arab dominion in the world which leads him to keep on preaching to Muḥammad. The monk's mission is characterized as a form of 'damage control', aimed at securing the future power of the Arabs. In effect, if he had not preached Christianity to the Arabs, then their rule could have been much worse. The monk's traces can still be found in the Qur'an, Bartholomew concludes. Reminiscent of the *Legend* and the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥalē*, the Qur'an's understanding of Christ as Word of God stems from Pakhura's teaching, as opposed to all the error that was proclaimed by Muḥammad and his successors who codified the Qur'an.[45]

In the next sections of this chapter it will become clear that in many respects the Byzantine and Medieval European traditions about the Christian influence on the Prophet are radically different from the texts that we have discussed so far. Nonetheless, there are examples of texts in Latin which do reflect the Eastern traditions about a pious and persevering counsellor to the Prophet. It need not surprise us that one important channel of transmission were the Crusader States. William of Tripoli, a Dominican residing in the East wrote his *Notitia de Machometo* as an aid for his fellow Dominicans and other Christians to collectively expose the untruth of Islam. His 'knowledge' about Islam often reflects the ideas of Christian Arabs. His way of describing Muḥammad's youth shows that he has absorbed the stories of local people. He mentions the fact that Baḥīrā had received a revelation about a man who would appear in his monastery and who would oppress Egypt for a long time. When Muḥammad arrived in actual fact, the tiny door of his monastery transformed itself into a majestic gate so as to welcome the chosen man. Again, it is the monk who then introduced Muḥammad to the basics of the faith. Only once the monk is killed by Muḥammad's companions did the evangelization of the Arabs go completely off track. From then on, as William saw it, they turned to robbery and plunder.[46] It was also in this later period that the Qur'an was written.

[45] Todt, *Bartholomaios von Edessa*, pp. 12–13, 20–21, 68–75 (tr).

[46] Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis*, pp. 196–203 (ttr). For the theme of Baḥīrā's murder, see below: Ch. 6, pp. 189–196.

According to William, it only happened after Muḥammad's death, when his followers became aware of the fact that other religions have a Holy Book.[47]

### *Baḥīrā the Heretic*

In the previous section I have noted that the few Syriac and Christian Arabic texts which go into detail about the alleged contact between Muḥammad and a Christian do not portray this as the negative influence of the master on the disciple. There is one interesting exception: the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* ('The Book of the Rolls'). It is a voluminous text, composed by a Miaphysite Christian, which integrates slightly adapted versions of the *Cave of Treasures* and the *Testament of Adam*, prophecies about the early Christian kings, and an account of Clement's encounter with Peter and the adventures of Peter in Rome, among other things.[48] In addition, this work contains a detailed revelation of Christ to Peter, which contains some of the most vicious statements about Islam to be found in Christian-Arabic writings.[49] Christ reveals to Peter what will happen to the world when Islam appears. When explaining to him where the rule of the 'Sons of the Desert Ass', i.e. Muḥammad, comes from, Christ also alludes to Baḥīrā:

> Know, o Peter, that when the herdsman of the Sons of the Wolf appears he will be acquainted with the faith, which he will learn from the straying sheep who is banished from my church to the desert, speaking about me in the way the Jews do and hating me and my flock. He will have the clothes of a lamb even though he is a devouring wolf and at that time he will resemble a sheep. This herdsman will appear in the year ….[50]

From this piece it is only clear that the Christian teacher of Muḥammad was banished from the church. Yet whether he is also the wolf in the sheepskin is unclear, given the impression left in last line to the

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[47] Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis*, pp. 244–247, pp. 210–215 (ttr). The anonymous text *De statu Saracenorum*, which was composed just a few years later, uses the *Notitia de Machometo* extensively and gives a similar account of the happenings with the monk; see Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis*, pp. 268–277 (ttr).

[48] Mingana has translated the work on the basis of a Karshūnī manscript, which he published in facsimile with his translation: Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter'.

[49] See Roggema, 'Biblical exegesis and interreligious polemics'.

[50] Anon, *Kītāb al-majāll*, fol. 67a. I am translating here from the unedited MS Par. Ar. 76, which is slightly clearer than the manuscript published Mingana.

effect that it is Muḥammad. Further on in Christ's revelation to Peter about the rise of Islam, the Christian teacher appears once more, but again it is unclear what the author wants to say about him. One can recognize quite clearly the references to the two Jews who spread false traditions and composed the Qurʾan. They appear as 'K' and 'S'.[51] They are predicted as interfering in the Prophet's affairs after the death of the 'straying sheep', i.e. the Christian teacher:

> When the straying sheep, who will be his teacher in the beginning [and] who belongs to my people, has died, two Jews will befriend him [i.e. Muḥammad] […] these two men will compose a book for the desert ass, compiled from many books. These two Jews will believe in me from one point of view and disbelieve in me from another. This man will take twelve chiefs, resembling me at that time. Woe, o Peter, to the two Jewish hypocrites after him. And woe to the straying man before that, who then becomes his teacher. His name starts with B. These three are the head of hypocrisy and destruction. They will corrupt what is orthodox (*mustaqīm*) in the sayings of their lord and what is corrupt they will make even more corrupt.[52]

The view of this apocalyptist, who voices his anti-Islamic polemic through the mouth of Christ, resembles the *Apology of al-Kindī* to some extent. One can recognize in it, for example, the alleged influence of two wicked Jews after the death of Baḥīrā. It remains unclear, however, whether the Christian teacher is involved with writing the Qurʾan or not. At first it seems that this was only the role of the two Jews, but then three men are mentioned together as the instigators of 'hypocrisy and destruction'.

Despite the vagueness of both of the passages quoted at length above, at least there is the clear message in both that the straying sheep was a Christian, who is partly to blame for the untruths of Muḥammad's message. If we compare this with the Syriac and Christian Arabic texts mentioned in the previous section, then it becomes evident that the

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[51] The first is Kaʿb, who is described as disseminator of false hadiths, the second is probably Salmān al-Fārisī, because it is said that this man will come from the East. According to Muslim tradition he was a Zoroastrian, but he appears as a Jewish convert to Islam in the *Liber denudationis* as well; Burman, *Religious Polemic*, pp. 270–273 (tr). The author suggests that he is one of the people to whom the 'foreign tongue' of Q 16:103 refers. When two men suggested this to the Prophet he had an epileptic fit; he tried to defend himself by reciting the verse, but his opponents replied: 'It is possible that they speak and explain to you in their language. You will embellish and correct it in your language'. For the polemical use of Q 16:103, see above: pp. 123–128.

[52] Anon, *Kītāb al-majāll*, fol. 68a.

Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* is somewhat of an isolated case. However, this text is rather unremarkable if one reads it against the background of Christian writings about Islam from Byzantium or Europe, in which the role of the Christian teacher to Muḥammad is frequently described in markedly negative terms. There are numerous texts which describe him as a heretic of sorts. Or alternatively, he is a deceiver, who consciously leads people astray for a variety of reasons.

In this section I want to look in detail at some of the texts which describe the monk as a heretic. To discuss this theme exhaustively is close to impossible, since the sources are endless. The best that can be done is a close reading of a number of them, which in turn will reveal that there were many different ideas in circulation, each revealing a different interpretation of what Islam really is.

### *The Arian monk*

The accusation that Muḥammad had received his religious knowledge from a heretical Christian can be traced back to as early as the first half of the eighth century, when John of Damascus in his disorderly critique of Islam wrote that Muḥammad had met an Arian monk before creating his own particular 'heresy'.[53] The statement comes at the beginning of Chapter 100/101 of *De Haeresibus*, but no further word is devoted to this supposed informant of Muḥammad, nor is a name provided.

Theodore Abū Qurra echoes John of Damascus' assertion in one of his treatises against Islam. While trying to prove to his imaginary Muslim opponent that Christ is pre-eternal and co-substantial with his Father, Theodore refers to Muḥammad as a 'false prophet who used to be pupil of an Arian'.[54] The association of Islam with Arianism in the minds of mainstream Christians found its roots in the similarities between the Islamic notion of Christ as a creature, with a human nature, and Arius' subordinationist Christology. Muslim theologians recognized the similarity as well and praised the followers of Arius

[53] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 132 (t), p. 133 (tr). For the question of its authenticity, see above: Ch. 1, p. 13, n. 11.

[54] Theodore Abū Qurra, 'Demonstratio, quod Deus habeat Filium consubstantialum, ut ipse carentem principio, et coeternum', pp. 1557–1558 (ttr); Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, pp. 118–119 (ttr).

for not going astray in the way the majority of Christians had.[55] The tenth-century convert to Islam al-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb, for example, calls the followers of Arius 'close to the truth'. He praises their faith in the human Christ and only regrets that they did not recognize Muḥammad as a prophet.[56] Both he and the Byzantine polemicists were obviously unaware that Arianism was no longer an existing sect in the seventh century Near East.

The idea that a follower of the fourth-century heresiarch Arius was ultimately responsible for Muḥammad's doctrine of a fully human Christ was occasionally expressed by later Christian writers, but it should be noted that it was much less influential than some of the other suggestions of Christian writers about harmful influences on the Prophet. An overview of the many writings in which this issue appears shows that other strands within the polemic outdid the tradition about the Arian connection. One particular strand evolving in both the Byzantine and European polemical traditions portrayed the connection between Muḥammad and a certain Christian as strategic and grounded in self-interest rather than having to do with religion. In these stories, as we will see, the contents of the new religion receive little attention compared with the deceitful intentions and actions of the two men. Another strand of the polemic kept the focus on religious issues proper, but broadened the notion of heretical influences on Muḥammad to include not merely Arianism, but also a number of other alleged heresies. 'Nestorianism' was the most influential of these, but 'Nicolaitism' and 'Sabellianism' were brought into the picture too.[57] Even in John of Damascus' work itself the Arian monk eventually lost his unique status, when a copyist of *De Haeresibus* added that Muḥammad's informants were 'Jews, Christians, Arians and Nestorians'.[58]

And yet a number of later Byzantine writers did echo John of Damascus. They told a tale that was primarily based on a notion of the

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[55] Ibn Ḥazm mentions Arius' *tawḥīd* but is aware that his sect had died out: *al-Faṣl fī l-milal*, part. 1, p. 48.

[56] Sepmeijer, *Een Weerlegging van het Christendom*, p. 125 (t), p. 11 (tr).

[57] For the alleged link between Muḥammad and the Nicolaitans, see below: Ch. 6, p. 188, n. 127. For Sabellianism and further heresies mentioned in Latin writings as having influenced Islam, see: Daniel, *Islam and the West*, pp. 209–213. Sabellianism appears as the root of Islam in some writings about Islam from Ethiopia, see: Gori, 'Islam in Etiopia'.

[58] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, p. 73.

Islamic origins of the new religion as described in the chronicle of Theophanes, to which they added the idea of Muḥammad's heretical teacher.[59] George Hamartolos ('George the Monk'), a late ninth-century continuator of Theophanes, lists a triad of encounters with religious groups that eventually led to the formation of Islamic doctrine:

> From the Jews Muḥammad learnt the notion of monotheism (literally: 'monarchy'), from the Arians that the Word and the Spirit are created and from the Nestorians he learnt the rejection of Anthropolatry.[60]

These doctrines, George believes, were then fused with a number of other, more arbitrary, precepts such as female circumcision. This depiction of the genesis of Muḥammad's religion as the outcome of interactions in Palestine with three different erroneous faiths was repeated by several Byzantine writers. It occurs for example in the anonymous tract entitled *Against Muḥammad* and in Euthymios Zigabenos' *Panoplia dogmatike*, a refutation of heresies written around the year 1100.[61] It also served as a base for the account of Islam included in the universal history of George Kedrenos (d. 1057).[62] Adel-Théodore Khoury, in one of his studies on Byzantine polemic against Islam, reviewed this tradition about a triad of heretical influences during Muḥammad's early career and justly remarks with some irony: 'On ne voit pas par quel concours extraordinaire de circonstances concertées Mahomet fut empêché de converser avec des melkites orthodoxes et de puiser à leur contact aussi des renseignements religieux'.[63] Indeed, this tradition makes it look as if Muḥammad was destined only to meet those adhering to unacceptable doctrines.

Interestingly, the same theme was elaborated upon by Armenian historians. It is well known that probably the oldest source to give an interpretation of early Islamic history is the Armenian history attributed to Sebeos. This work, written in the second half of the seventh century, appears to preserve details about the Islamic conquests that have been twisted or lost in later sources, both Eastern Christian and Islamic.

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[59] For Theophanes' view on Muhammad's mission, see the next section, pp. 182–185.

[60] Georgius Monachus, 'Chronicon Breve', pp. 865–868 (ttr).

[61] Anon, 'Contra Muhammed', pp. 1449–1450 (ttr); Euthymii Zigabeni, 'Panoplia Dogmatica', pp. 1333–1334 (ttr).

[62] Although not literally copying the account of George Hamartolos he does not add any noteworthy details; Georgius Kedrenus, 'Compendium Historiarum', pp. 809–810 (ttr).

[63] Khoury, *Polémique byzantine contre l'Islam*, pp. 74–75.

The author describes Muḥammad's preaching without any reference to Christian influence. The success of Muḥammad's movement is explained solely in terms of a Jewish-Arab alliance. Jews had been trying to unite with the Arabs for some time before Muḥammad, it explains, but they had failed to do so because of religious differences. Only with the Prophet did the Arabs begin to believe in monotheism and in their Abrahamic ancestry, which led to the conquest of the Promised Land with a united force.[64] News that Muḥammad preached anything that resembled Christian doctrine did not reach this Armenian historian.

An important Armenian historical work of the tenth century builds upon the picture sketched by Sebeos. This is the *History of the House of Artsrunik'*. Its author, Thomas Artsruni, takes several of his ideas about the genesis of Islam from Sebeos, but he also picks up the thread of the Byzantine polemicists, when he mentions 'a disciple of the mania of the Arians' whom Muḥammad used to meet.[65] One of the interesting details to appear in this text is the double name 'Sargis Bhira'. Artsruni's acquaintance with this name reveals that he also had direct or indirect access to Syriac or Christian Arabic sources, since the Byzantines did not speak of a monk with this name until much later. Artsruni believed that the Prophet met the monk in Egypt and that he taught him that 'God has by nature no son'. He depicts the monk as instructing Muḥammad in the Old Law. An interesting detail of this early tenth-century account is the fact that Baḥīrā convinces Muḥammad that the promise to Abraham concerning a great leader will be fulfilled in him, on the condition that he adhere to the teachings.[66] This is not unlike the *Legend*. However, Baḥīrā is only one of many who had a role to play in the rise of Islam, according to this account. Among the other crucial figures were the demon who inspired Muḥammad, the Jews who made a pact with him, and Salman al-Fārisī who eventually wrote the Qur'an.[67]

The compiler of the *History of Aghuank'*, another tenth-century Armenian work, does not know include the double name.[68] He refers to

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[64] Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, vol. 1, pp. 94–97 (tr).

[65] Thomson, *History of the House of Artsrunik'*, p. 165 (tr).

[66] Thomson, *History of the House of Artsrunik'*, p. 165; relevant section also in: Thomson, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam', pp. 833–834.

[67] Thomson, *History of the House of Artsrunik'*, pp. 168–169 and Thomson, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam', p. 835.

[68] Two names are associated with this work, Movsēs Daskhurants'i and Movsēs

the hermit Baḥīrā, whom Muḥammad almost accidentally shot during their first encounter, as an Arian. The monk is described as having taught Muḥammad secretly 'from the Old and New Testaments after the manner of Arius who held that the Son was a created thing'.[69]

Another Armenian writer who spoke of Baḥīrā as an Arian is the late twelfth-century Samuel of Ani. In his account, Muḥammad was a follower of both Arius and Cerinthus. The latter is a first century Jewish-Christian Gnostic according to whom Christ was a mere man who received divine power at his baptism and lost it just before the crucifixion.[70] Thomson is probably right in assuming that it is the Islamic account of Christ's crucifixion that inspired the author to mention this heresy, although no effort is made in the text to explain what the statement is based on.[71] The claim is repeated by several later Armenian authors, one of whom, Vardan, asserts that in fact Sergius himself was a follower of Arius and Cerinthus, whom Muḥammad met in Egypt.[72] In Vardan's account the monk's role is overshadowed by the support Muḥammad received from the huge following of Jews who helped him to conquer the Holy Land.

The same pairing of heresies appears also in one of the most learned discussions of Islam in Armenian literature, by the fourteenth-century philosopher Grigor of Tatev. In his *Treatise against the Tajiks*, contained in his *Book of Questions*, he calls Muslims pagans nourished by the heresies of Arius and Cerinthus. When it comes to the actual life of Muḥammad, however, he only mentions Baḥīrā the Arian hermit at Sinai who taught Muḥammad.[73]

The above discussion leads us to the conclusion that Byzantine and

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Kaghankatuatsʿi. This history was compiled in the early tenth century but integrates reports about Islam from the three preceding centuries (see Greenwood, 'Movsēs Daskhurantsʿi (Movsēs Kaghankatuatsʿi)'). It is not known who wrote the section on Muḥammad and when it was written.

[69] Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, p. 186 (tr).

[70] The heresiographical tradition about Cerinthus is very diverse. See: Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic evidence*, pp. 1–19 and *passim*.

[71] Thomson, 'Armenian variations on the Baḥira Legend', p. 890 and *id*, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam', pp. 841–843.

[72] See the part of Vardan's *Universal History* dealing with the Arabs, which is published in: Muyldermans, *La Domination arabe en Armenie*, p. 41 (t), p. 74 (tr) and Thomson's translation in his 'Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelcʿi', pp. 175–176.

[73] Macler, 'L'Islam dans la littérature arménienne', p. 497, p. 509 (French paraphrase). A discussion of this 'academic' treatment of Islam can be found in Dadoyan, 'Grigor of Tatev: Treatise against the Tajiks'.

Armenian writers never gave much weight to the notion that Arianism stood at the root of Islam. Although mentioning it, they do not go into the historical background of the connection, nor do they show in any detail what the similarities are between the Christian heresies and Islam.

The suggestion that Muḥammad's teacher was an Arian is particularly interesting in connection with the *Legend*, because this suggestion stands in sharp contrast to what is claimed in the recension A2. When Baḥīrā tries to convert Muḥammad to his faith, he realizes that the youngster cannot grasp the full truth. He believes that Christ is created, because 'the confession of the cursed Arius became firmly rooted in his mind' ({16.24}). This is striking. Baḥīrā is obviously not the one professing this confession. It is Muḥammad's mind that causes his faith to become similar to Arianism: 'the message of the truthful prophecies, the clear proofs, the manifest testimonies and the evident miracles escaped him (*dhahaba 'anhu*)'.

### *Baḥīrā the Nestorian*

All in all, the idea of the Arian monk never became dominant. In Western medieval sources it was definitely eclipsed by the story of the East-Syrian influence on the Prophet. If we assume that the Christian writers in the West preferred to refer to 'Nestorianism' rather than the extinct Arianism because of a greater historical probability, we may be giving them too much credit, although in the course of the Crusades more and more Westerners saw with their own eyes that East-Syrians were numerous in the Near East. Travelers to the East came home with both positive and negative ideas about them. Among those with negative ideas was Bartholomew of Lucca, who noted the importance of East-Syrian monasteries in the Muslim world and concluded that this was a sign of the collaboration between the two faiths. He himself did not travel to the East, so one wonders who passed on this news to him about these grand monasteries.[74] Von den Brincken in her in-depth study of the attitude of medieval Europeans to the Eastern Churches focuses on the ambiguous attitude of the West to the East-Syrian Church. She draws attention to the fact that not only the reportedly despicable teacher of Muḥammad was thought to be a

[74] Noted by Von den Brincken, *Die 'Nationes christianorum orientalium'*, p. 378.

'Nestorian', but that it was also understood that the mysterious ally of the West, Prester John, ought to be a follower of this Church as well.[75] A pilgrim to the Holy Land in the late-thirteenth century, Burchard of Mount Zion, was eager to point out that the Eastern Christians whom he had met could hardly be called evil heretics:

> Many people are terrified when they hear that these countries overseas are inhabited by Nestorians, Jacobites, Maronites, Georgians, and others, who take their name from heretics whom the Church condemned. But this is absolutely untrue. God forbid that it should be so. They are simple men of devout behavior. I don't deny that there are some fools among them, just as the Roman Church does not lack its fools.[76]

While struggling to be positive, Burchard's comments nonetheless acknowledge the overall ambiguous reputation that 'Nestorians' and other Eastern Christian traditions enjoyed in the West. It seems to be the case that many authors formed their ideas of Muḥammad around such reflections too. However, in many works about Islam one can determine quite easily that the link between Muḥammad and a 'Nestorian' was based simply on what they had read in authoritative works.

In the first section of this survey we have already come across an East-Syrian monk in the *Apology of al-Kindī*. In that discussion I tried to show that Pseudo-al-Kindī's subject was quite different from the wicked disseminator of false beliefs that many Westerners wanted him to be. As is well-known, the *Apology of al-Kindī*, after having been translated into Latin, had a major impact on the development of the Muḥammad legends in Europe. Yet, within the European intellectual context al-Kindī's monk was soon associated with an evil outlaw who spread false doctrine in order to take revenge on his former church. The relevant section of the *Apology* was translated at least twice into Latin. Best known is the translation made by Peter of Toledo which became an important part of the Toledan-Cluniac Corpus. Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, eagerly made use of the text for his extensive refutation of Islam. Among the material that became available to him, he found Pseudo-al-Kindī's notes on Sergius the Nestorian teacher of the Prophet, which

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[75] Von den Brincken, *Die 'Nationes christianorum orientalium'*, p. 293.

[76] Burchardi de Monte Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*, in: Laurent, *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor*, p. 93 (t); translation quoted from Southern, *Western Views of Islam*, p. 64 (tr). It has also been noted that Oliver of Paderborn, canon and participant in the Fifth Crusade, saw the East-Syrians in a positive light. His belief in the advent of Prester John made him look at Eastern Christians with great expectations; Van den Brincken, 'Islam und Oriens Christianus', p. 95. See also: Tolan, *Saracens*, pp. 199–203.

he used for his *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*.[77] This 'discovery' of the monk's Nestorianism would be influential for his thinking. For Peter the Venerable, it complemented what he already knew about an exiled monk who influenced Muḥammad from Anastasius Bibliothecarius's translation of Theophanes' chronicle. Furthermore, the new insight presented him with new grounds on which to base his polemical analysis of Islam.[78]

To other readers of the Latin version of the *Apology of al-Kindī* it constituted a juicy detail which they integrated creatively in their descriptions on the life of the Prophet. Peter of Cluny was somewhat different, because he was trying to argue that Islam ought to be approached in the same manner as the numerous Christian heresies that were present in the world and in the books of the Church Fathers. However easily some of his contemporaries may have dispelled Islam in a few words as one absurd deviation from Christianity or another, Peter nevertheless felt that he had to justify this particular categorization of Islam in his writings. In a certain way he felt that Islam was such a bizarre and dangerous mixture of true and false ('honey and poison') that perhaps the term 'heresy' did not apply and that Islam should be called paganism. After all, he wondered, how can a religion that does not even believe in baptism or the Eucharist be called a Christian heresy?[79]

Peter turned to the *Apology of al-Kindī* and Theophanes' chronicle for answers. Following Theophanes, he draws attention to the lengthy period of Muḥammad's life before the beginning of his preaching, concluding that he desired absolute power over his community only after he had already gained considerable personal fame and wealth. Religion then became a 'cover-up' for gaining power. The fact that his religious undertaking did not lead to the true faith was thus obviously due to the workings of the Devil, who sent the excommunicated Nestorian monk Sergius to his dwelling place:

> And so Sergius, joined with Mohammed, filled in what was lacking to him, and explaining to him also the sacred scriptures, both the Old Testament and the New, [in part] according to the thinking of his master Nestorius, who denied that our Saviour was God, [and] in part accord-

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[77] The relevant section of the *Apology of al-Kindī* in Latin translation can be found in González Muñoz, *Exposición y refutación*, pp. 66–67, Muñoz Sendino, 'Apología del Cristianismo', pp. 413–414 and Vandecasteele, 'Étude comparative', p. 130.

[78] For the influence of Anastasius Bibliothecarius' translation of Theophanes' chronicle, see the also next section: p. 185.

[79] Glei, *Petrus Venerabilis*, pp. 14–15 (ttr).

> ing to his own interpretation, and likewise completely infecting him with the fables of the apocryphal writings, he made him a Nestorian Christian.[80]

Drawing again from the *Apology of al-Kindī*, Peter goes on to tell about the Jews who joined Muḥammad's cause. Their plan was to make sure that he would not become a real Christian. On the basis of the teachings of these two parties Muḥammad wrote his Qur'an. Although Peter is clearly repulsed by Nestorianism, he does indirectly admit that the monk taught Muḥammad some proper Christian doctrine, when he lists some of the elements of Islam which Peter regards as acceptable elements within Muḥammad's syncretist teaching.[81]

Years after the *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*, Peter the Venerable wrote the *Contra Sectam Saracenorum*. The introduction to this second treatise discusses the traces of Christian heresies in Islamic doctrine and surveys the ways in which his predecessors have refuted them.[82] But the question of the proper categorization of Islam remained uncertain in his mind.[83] Strangely enough, despite drawing attention to the similarities between Islamic teachings and Christian and Jewish doctrine, notably its partial acceptance of the Bible, Peter does not bring up any teacher of Muḥammad in this later work. As there are clear indications that the work is unfinished, it may be the case that he had intended to refer later on to the teachers which he had mentioned in his *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum*. It is also possible that since he could identify so many layers of known heresy in Islamic teachings, he eventually came to the conclusion that including a rather distant historical account about Nestorian influences early in the Prophet's life became unnecessary.

By sheer coincidence part of the *Apology of al-Kindī* made its way into the Latin world for a second time some decades after the Cluniac initiative. A Christian Arabic work of polemic against Islam in three parts, of which the middle part was a section from the *Apology*, was translated into Latin to become quite popular in Europe in the years following. The name that is given to it in modern scholarship is the *Gregorian Report*, on the basis of the introduction to the work in the

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[80] Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, p. 129 (tr).
[81] Glei, *Petrus Venerabilis*, pp. 6–13 (ttr).
[82] Glei, *Petrus Venerabilis*, pp. 30–55 (ttr).
[83] Glei, *Petrus Venerabilis*, pp. 48–53 (ttr).

Chronicle of Matthew Paris (wr. 1250s), who inserts it under the events of the year 1236:

> In those days a text was sent to Pope Gregory the Ninth from the Orient by preachers who were traveling around there, which deals with the error or rather the fury of Muḥammad, prophet of the Saracens.[84]

Matthew Paris, however, was confused; the text was already known half a century before the time in which the chronicler believed the transmission to have taken place. The editor of the *Gregorian Report*, Vandecasteele, has unraveled the reception of the work and shown the likely source of confusion. He noted—as others had before him—that the text already appears in some of the manuscripts of Godfrey of Viterbo's universal rhymed chronicle *Pantheon*.[85] It was discovered that the *Gregorian Report* appeared for the first time in the fourth redaction of that work, which was made somewhere around 1187. This coincides with the short-lived pontificate of Gregory VIII. This pope, who happened to be elected just a few weeks after Salāḥ al-Dīn's reconquest of Jerusalem, called for a new crusade and may have been interested in disseminating fresh anti-Muslim propaganda.[86] The *Report* is relevant for us here, because it also includes the section of al-Kindī's description of Muḥammad's monk, who is twice the subject of discussion. Four aspects of the *Report*'s comments about the monk are worth noting in particular.

First of all, a slight change in the *Apology*'s wording gives quite a different twist to the intentions of the monk. The first reference to him is not more than a reference to the fact that he instructed the Prophet. In the *Gregorian Report* this is given as 'It was a certain monk who had fallen into heresy and had been excommunicated who taught him and wrote his doctrine'.[87] So the notion of heresy is already introduced here. Then, in the longer section it says:

> It is claimed that the primary cause of Muḥammad's Law prevailing was a monk called Sosius who, having been excommunicated for heresy, was

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[84] Vandecasteele, 'Étude comparative', p. 82 (tr).

[85] The Pantheon has been edited and published by Waitz in *MGH* 22, but the *Gregorian Report* has been omitted. Cerulli published the piece separately in *Il Libro della Scala*, pp. 417–427. Landron noted the divergences between the Cluniac translation of the Apology and the one with Godfrey of Viterbo, and showed that there are hints to yet another translation in Ramon Lull's *Liber de fine*; Landron, *Attitudes Nestoriennes*, pp. 87–88.

[86] Vandecasteele, 'Étude comparative', pp. 82–83.

[87] Vandecasteele, 'Étude comparative', p. 107.

> expelled from the Church. *Wanting to take revenge on the Christians* he went to the place called Thueme etc.[88]

As we have seen in the Arabic version of the *Apology of al-Kindī*, the intention was radically different: the monk wanted to do something good in the eyes of his fellow Christians and went to Arabia as a missionary.[89] This is something that the unknown polemicist who composed the *Gregorian Report* did not rephrase well and something Peter the Venerable did not read well. A second aspect worth noting is the corrupted name of the monk. The extant manuscripts, which were copied from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, all contain strange forms for the name: Sosius, Solus, Soccius etc. The reason why that is noteworthy is that no copyist managed to correct this: a living tradition about Sergius did apparently not exist. Jacob of Vitry, for example, copied the name Sosius in his *Historia Hierosolomitana*.[90] Thirdly, the end of the story about 'Sosius' is also the end of the excerpt from the *Apology of al-Kindī*. The *Report* then moves on to discuss the Islamic belief in a carnal afterlife. This means that the *Apology*'s section about the Jewish companions of Muḥammad has not been included in the excerpt. It is to be assumed that some of the Latin writers in the following centuries who wrote about Islam but not about Jewish influence had only had access to texts that were ultimately dependent on the *Gregorian Report*, since there is no reason to assume that the authors did not want to refer to the activities of the Jewish companions of Muḥammad. Finally, coming back to the theme of the 'Nestorianism' of the monk, the text includes the *Apology*'s claim that Sergius changed his name into 'Nastorius', but the surprising fact is that no explanation is given for it. Thus the notion of 'heresy' as such seems to have been more important than the question what this heresy was about.

In many of the Western medieval propagandistic descriptions of Islam in the following centuries, the monk's alleged 'Nestorianism' is mentioned. Sometimes the polemicists and historians go into the question of why he was excommunicated and what his intentions were vis-à-vis the Arabs and his former community. Many different theories

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[88] Vandecasteele, 'Étude comparative', p. 131.

[89] See above: p. 159.

[90] Iacobi de Vitriaco, *Historia Hierosolomitana*, in: Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, part 1, p. 1056.

emerged and the diversity of interpretations is rather remarkable.[91] Some simply believed that he was excommunicated because he was a Nestorian. Other authors make him to be a Benedictine who went astray, or even a Greek Orthodox monk.[92] It was also suggested that the monk departed for Arabia on his own initiative after 'his masters' Nestorius and Euthychus were condemned.[93] On the other hand, there were also authors who followed the original idea of the *Apology of al-Kindī* quite closely. They referred to the Nestorian man and believed he was exiled because of some uproar in his church, not because his fellows were not Nestorians themselves. This is one of the ideas included in Vincent of Beauvais' account of Islam.[94]

Von den Brincken, noted above, discovered a late instance of the polemic surrounding Muḥammad and his Nestorian teacher in the work of the Dominican Archbishop John of Soltaniya (wr. 1404). In his *Libellus de Noticia Orbis* he claims that Muḥammad was taught by the Nestorian Sergius, who was also a magician and who wanted to create an anti-Church. The most interesting detail of this account is that the author describes Muḥammad as having grown up as an orthodox Christian. It is only when he meets the wicked monk that he goes astray. As Von den Brinken comments: 'Hier hat der Nestorianerhaß seinen Höhepunkt erreicht: sie sind die Schöpfer des Islams, also gewissermaßen noch schlimmer als die Moslems'.[95]

### *Baḥīrā the Jacobite*

The first time that Sergius appears in a Western European source as a 'Jacobite' is in the work of Petrus Alphonsi, a Spanish Jew, born in the late eleventh century. After converting to Christianity in 1106 he wrote his *Dialogi contra Iudaeos*, which became one of the most beloved works of

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[91] The question of the monk's intention is closely related to the theme of the next section, pp. 182–188.

[92] For example Ludolphus de Sudheim, 'De Itinere Terre Sancte', p. 371.

[93] Guillaume d'Auvergne in his *Magisterium divinale*: relevant section quoted in Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 105 (tr). In a little known Latin treatise about Muḥammad from the Crusader States, said to be written by a certain Adelphus, it is even Nestorius himself who helps Muḥammad throughout his career; Bischoff, *Anecdota Novissima*, pp. 114–122. The author of this text claims to be well-informed, having derived his information from a Greek man in Antioch who knew Arabic.

[94] See Platti, 'L'image de l'Islam', pp. 99–102.

[95] Von den Brincken, *Die 'Nationes christianorum orientalium'*, p. 326, cf. p. 380. The relevant section of the work has not been edited.

*Adversos Iudaeos* in Medieval Europe.[96] He furthermore became famous for his philosophical didactic work *Disciplina Clericalis* as well as for his role in bringing Arabic learning to Northern Europe, where he moved soon after his conversion.

Within his *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* one chapter (V) is devoted to Islam.[97] The Jewish interlocutor Moses asks why Petrus converted to Christianity rather than to Islam, pointing out that in his native environment that would have been the most logical choice. This gets Petrus starting on his diatribe against Islam. Muḥammad is introduced, as usual, as a parvenu with an inexorable appetite for more. Having acquired the wealth of his wife, he next aspires to become king of Arabia and decides that prophethood is the best way to acquire the necessary power. His environment is mostly pagan, although there are also Nestorians and Jacobites living nearby, as well as some Jews who 'practiced the Law of Moses in a heretical manner, like the Samaritans'. We read that Muḥammad was aided in his plans to become king by his friend Sergius, who was an archdeacon in Antioch but had been excommunicated for his adherence to Jacobite doctrines. This is of course a novelty and Petrus' explanation is even more astonishing:

> Jacobites are heretics, called thus after a certain Jacob. They preach circumcision and believe that Christ was not God but only a just man conceived by the Holy Spirit and born from a virgin. They deny that he was crucified or died.[98]

When Sergius and Muḥammad begin their false mission in this way, according to Alphonsi, they are then joined by the Jews Abdias and Chabalahabar. Here we recognize Pseudo-al-Kindī, the most important source for this chapter, but the idea that the Jews perverted the original message of Sergius and Muḥammad is absent; indeed there is no competition or conflict between the Christian and the Jews in the account.[99] On the contrary, Sergius and the Jews collaborate in the

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[96] For the reception of Alfonsi's *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* see Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval readers*, pp. 95–131, esp. 108–110 for the impact of the anti-Islamic section on later works.

[97] Petri Alphonsi, 'Ex Judaeo Christiani Dialogi', pp. 597–606. See also: Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval readers*, pp. 27–33.

[98] Petri Alphonsi, 'Ex Judaeo Christiani Dialogi', p. 600.

[99] It is interesting to note that a sixteenth-century German translation of the Qur'an by Dionysius Carthusianus was printed with an illustration of this joint enterprise. It shows a group of Jews, 'Sergius the Heretic' and Muḥammad on the title page. The image is reproduced in: Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, p. 73.

project, with each inserting something of their heresy into the law of Muḥammad. In the ensuing discussion much of the traditional anti-Christian polemic is rehearsed, for example about Zaynab and Zayd and the collection of the Qur'an.

Petrus Alphonsi's reference to Baḥīrā as a Jacobite was echoed by a number of later polemicists. They may not have been aware of the fact that his explanation of Jacobite doctrine was erroneous; hence, they may not have felt the need to investigate the background of Muḥammad's teacher further.[100] For someone who had never had contact with Eastern Christians the uncritical acceptance of Alphonsi's words is not astonishing. After all, Petrus Alphonsi was an expert in all things Arab. In the case of Riccoldo da Montecroce (d. 1320), however, we have to judge otherwise. This Dominican missionary spent many years in the Near East, and therefore should be expected to know better. In his two writings about Islam he nevertheless brings up the Jacobite monk. In his *Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*, apart from mentioning two Jewish converts ('Abd Allāh ibn Salām and 'Salon Persa', who must be Salmān al-Fārisī) and the devil as Muḥammad's teacher, he speaks of Baheyra who was a Jacobite. He writes that he was the one who told Muḥammad 'many things from the New Testament, some things from a certain book called 'The Infancy of the Lord' and the 'Seven Sleepers', which he recorded in the Qur'an'.[101] In his later work *Contra legem Sarracenorum* Baheyra appears again as a Jacobite in a passage that is clearly inspired by the *Liber denudationis* and which speaks of the monk as a source, rather than as a heretic.[102] Echoing Petrus Alphonsi, Riccoldo asserts that some Nestorians joined Muḥammad's cause as well. They were, however, followers rather than instigators. The principal instigator was the Devil who saw that Christianity became more and more popular at the expense of idolatry.

Some polemicists had a more critical attitude towards the sources and refrained from blindly copying Alphonsi's statement about Baḥīrā's religious affiliation. In the Latin speaking world, for example, Marino Sanudo knows the work of Petrus Alphonsi and refers to it explic-

[100] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, vol. 2, p. 371 (tr); the anonymous Dominican or Franciscan note on 'the Saracens' (late thirteenth or fourteenth century): *De Saracenis et de Ritu ipsorum* in: Golubovich, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica*, vol. 1, pp. 399–401.

[101] Ricoldo da Montecroce, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte*, p. 198 (t), p. 199 (tr).

[102] Mérigoux, 'L'ouvrage d'un frère prêcheur', p. 85, pp. 118–119 (t), Ricoldo da Montecroce, *I Saraceni*, p. 92, pp. 144–145 (tr).

itly,[103] but does not follow the author's comments on the Jacobite teacher. For Marino it is the still good old Sergius the Nestorian who consciously duped Muḥammad's followers by making a dove pick grains from his ear and telling the people that it was the Holy Spirit.[104] The Byzantine emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (d. 1383) also relied heavily on Riccoldo for his extensive refutation of Islam. In the case of his work one gets the impression that he also consciously left Alphonsi's statement about the Jacobite teacher aside, although it could also be that he simply misunderstood it. He speaks of 'Jacob Baenra' who taught Muḥammad Nestorian doctrine.[105]

### *Baḥīrā the False Witness*

The oldest surviving account of the cunning 'strategic alliance' between Muḥammad and a Christian can be found in the *Chronographia* of Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818), written in the early ninth century. Theophanes' story about Muḥammad's life is a prime example of the exploitation of the *Sīra* by Christians for polemical purposes. It contains a number of narrative elements which later gained wide currency in the Christian portrayal of the Prophet in Medieval Europe, such as Muḥammad's marriage with Khadīja and his luring of followers with a promise of a carnal paradise. A crucial detail in the story is Muḥammad's alleged epilepsy. Theophanes described how Khadīja soon became disillusioned with her young spouse: 'When his wife became aware of this [epilepsy], she was greatly distressed, inasmuch as she, a noblewoman, had married a man such as he, who was not only poor, but also an epileptic'. The solution to this problem was for Muḥammad to pretend that he was a prophet: 'He tried deceitfully to placate her by saying: "I keep seeing a vision of a certain angel called Gabriel, and being unable to bear his sight, I faint and fall down".'

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[103] Marinus Sanuto, 'Liber secretorum fidelium crucis', in: Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, part. 2, p. 126.

[104] Marinus Sanuto, 'Liber secretorum fidelium crucis', in: Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, part. 2, p. 124.

[105] Joannis Cantacuzeni, 'Contra Mahometem', pp. 604–605 (ttr). John VI Kantakouzenos used the translation of Riccoldo's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, which was made by Demetrios Kydones some years before. The printed text of this translation has 'Mapyra' as the name of the monk in one of the two instances; Demetris Cydonis, 'Translatio Libri Fratris Richardi', p. 1069. For the dependency of John's refutation on Demetrios' translation, see: Todt, *Kaiser Johannes VI. Kantakuzenos*, pp. 298–305.

At this point a monk is willing to falsely testify that Muḥammad is a prophet. Just as in the *Sīra*, Muḥammad's wife approaches this person to inquire about Muḥammad's visions:

> Now she had a certain monk living there, a friend of hers (who had been exiled for his depraved doctrine), and she related everything to him, including the angel's name. Wishing to satisfy her, he said to her, 'He has spoken the truth, for this is the angel who is sent to all the prophets'. When she heard the words of the false monk, she was the first to believe in Mouamed.[106]

One may be tempted to recognize the figure of Baḥīrā in these words, but, in fact, the only monk whom Theophanes mentions is clearly modeled on Khadīja's Christian cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal from the Islamic tradition. Neither Waraqa nor Khadīja are mentioned by name by Theophanes, but one easily recognizes that the reassuring words are those of Waraqa cited in the *Sīra* of Ibn Hishām: 'Holy Holy! Verily by Him in whose hand in Waraqa's soul, if thou hast spoken to me the truth, O Khadīja, there hath come unto him the greatest Nāmūs who came to Moses aforetime, and lo, he is the prophet of this people'.[107]

Theophanes (or a possible Arabic source which he used) leaves the events much the same as in the *Sīra*. It is only the intentions and character of this Christian figure which have been adapted for the polemical agenda.[108] A role as teacher, heretical or not, is not mentioned. He does, however, speak of a group of Jews who taught Muḥammad to be critical of Christians. These Jews had first been convinced that Muḥammad was the Messiah but changed their minds when they saw him eat camel meat. They remained doubtful afterwards, but still not dare to forsake his cause.[109] Theophanes asserts that Muḥammad was himself seeking knowledge not only with Jews but also with Christians: 'Whenever he came to Palestine,' the author notes, 'he consorted with Jews and Christians and sought from them certain scriptural matters'.[110]

Theophanes' account was the starting point for several later polemical descriptions of Islam, both within the Byzantine and the Latin tradi-

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[106] Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, pp. 464–465 (tr); De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1, p. 334 (t).

[107] Quoted from: Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 170.

[108] For the question of his Arabic sources, see Conrad, 'Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition'.

[109] For Jewish variations to this theme, see below, Ch. 6, pp. 196–199.

[110] Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 464 (tr); De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1, p. 334 (t).

tion. As far as Byzantium was concerned, the tenth-century chronicler Constantine Porphyrogennetos followed Theophanes in recounting the story of these Jews feigning belief in the Prophet. When talking about the involvement of a Christian, however, he combines Theophanes' Waraqa-like figure with the tradition about the Arian, which went back to a text of John of Damascus.[111] First he devotes a short passage to the life of Muḥammad, concentrating on his relationship with Khadīja. It is only after Constantine has described Muḥammad's claim to receive revelations from Gabriel that an Arian is mentioned. Nothing is said about his role except that he pretended to be a monk and supported Muḥammad in his fraudulent claims 'for the love of gain'.[112]

George Hamartolos (or 'George the Monk'), a mid-ninth-century continuator of Theophanes' chronicle, alters Theophanes' account slightly and then digresses into a sharp critique of Islam that was echoed frequently by later Byzantine polemicists.[113] He leaves out the element of the Jews who believed that Muḥammad was the Messiah, but further embroiders the rest of the story, including identifying the monk in Muḥammad's environment as an Arian and supplying him with the pseudonym 'Arianus'. This man, according to George, was expelled from the Kallistratos monastery in Constantinople, a detail which is echoed in some later chronicles.[114] Where the chronicler gets this information from is unclear. It is unlikely that he knows something that his predecessors did not know about a monk wandering off to Arabia a century and a half before his time. More likely, he wants to fill in some blanks in the narrative of Theophanes and chooses to locate Muḥammad's friend in a monastery associated with heresy and astronomy.[115] The exiled monk consciously deceived Khadīja, George continues, when telling her that Muḥammad's epileptic fits were actual

[111] See above: pp. 168–169.

[112] Moravcsik and Jenkins, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, pp. 76–81 (ttr).

[113] See Khoury, *Les Théologiens Byzantins et l'Islam*, pp. 180–186.

[114] See Khoury, 'Bibliographie du Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien', p. 195, for later works which mention a connection between the monk and the Kallistratos monastery. In a marginal note to the manuscript of Niketas of Byzantium's polemical tract against the Qur'an, the monk's origins are also said to be Constantinople. See: Nicetae Byzantini Philosopho, 'Confutatio falsi libri quem scripsit Mohamedes arabs', pp. 841–842.

[115] Coincidentally, it is Theophanes who informs us about this little-known monastery. See: De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1, p. 368 and p. 381 (t); Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, p. 514 and p. 529 (tr). Cf. Hatlie, 'Spiritual authority and monasticism', p. 206.

revelations from the angel Gabriel.[116] Again, an actual religious influence is not mentioned in George's account, even if the monk is suggestively called Arianus.

Several other Byzantine texts, some of which have already been discussed in the section on the heretical monk, refer to the exiled monk in Muḥammad's environment in similar terms. His principal role was to support Muḥammad's false claim of prophethood.[117]

Moving from Byzantium to Europe, one finds a wealth of Latin sources that elaborated upon this theme of the 'false witness'. Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the late ninth-century translator of Theophanes' chronicle, was among the first to take up the question. This translation became an important source for information about Islam at the time; not because it had so much to say about it, but because the work was one of the few texts available until the time of the crusades. In the course of the transmission of Theophanes' text, however, the false monk suffered some damage. Instead of being a monk ('monachos') he became an adulterer ('moichos'), due to a scribal error in the Greek. Anastasius' manuscript included the error, and hence one of the scant pieces of information about Muḥammad to be transmitted to the West described Muḥammad's alleged accomplice not only as a 'pseudo-monk' but also as an adulterer.[118] Anastasius' passage appears in more or less the same form in later historical works.

The story of the Prophet's involvement with this vicious monk branched off into several other directions within the corpus of Latin writings about Islam. On the one hand, it became the starting point for a fantastic tale in which Muḥammad voices his fraudulent claims already before his first marriage. Accordingly, his desire to marry a rich lady was the main motive for his lies initially. Muḥammad is described as wanting to marry the queen of Corozan and he employed all possible tricks to achieve this aim. According to some authors, the imposturous monk played a minor role in this series of events as an accessory; in most versions the blame falls completely on Muḥammad.[119]

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116 Georgius Monachus, 'Chronicon Breve', pp. 865–866 (ttr).

117 See for example: Joannis Zonaras, 'Annales', p. 1286 (tr).

118 De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 2, p. 209 (t).

119 This name, which occurs in various forms in Latin texts about Islam, probably reflects the Biblical 'Chorazin' as in Matt 11:21 and Luke 10:13: 'Woe unto thee Chorazin. Woe unto thee Bethsaida', or else it may be an attempt to render the Khurasan in Latin. For versions of this particular story, see for example: Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, vol. 2, p. 371 (tr); Vincent of Beauvais: see Platti, Emilio,

One of the most remarkable texts about Muḥammad to appear in Europe was the *Romance of Muḥammad*. It was written in the mid-thirteenth century in Old French, in rhyme, by Alexander du Pont. This story of Muḥammad's life revolves around his relationship with a pious ascetical hermit. The hermit receives a revelation about a new religion which will oppress Christianity in the future. When Muḥammad comes to him for advice on good conduct, the monk suspects that this is the very figure who will initiate this new movement. Muḥammad, in the meantime, by means of his great rhetorical skills, is capable of talking his rich widowed boss into marrying him, after which his epileptic fits begin. This is the beginning of trouble for the hermit, because Muḥammad then puts pressure on him to declare that he is bringing a new revelation. When the aspiring prophet threatens to kill the hermit, the latter consents to announce the new religion to his people, justifying it with the argument that 'the code that we follow is too harsh and hard to understand'.[120]

A development in the opposite direction is a collection of equally fantastic stories harshly blaming the hermit for his part in the success of Muḥammad. After reading in the most Latin sources what an evil licentious deceiver Muḥammad was, it is quite remarkable to find those stories which instead turn him into the meek and innocent victim of this devilish hermit. In such stories the monk is truly anti-Christian. Not only does he lead Muḥammad or the Arabs astray through his false testimony, he also has an explicit agenda to harm the Christian world. It is perhaps not surprising then that many considered him an outright apostate, rather than a heretic. This is the label that he receives in many Latin texts.

Within this strand of fanciful polemic there was quite some variation on the issue of the monk's motives. It was a lust for power, according to some.[121] It was his hunger for booty, according to others.[122] Alterna-

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'L'image de l'Islam', pp. 72–73 (tr); Jacob van Maerlant, *Spiegel Historiael*, vol. 3, p. 74 (t). The Spanish chronographer Lucas of Tuy connects the seduction of the queen with a certain monk called John of Antioch (a detail originating with Petrus Alfonsi): Lucae Tudensis *Chronicon Mundi*, pp. 166–167.

[120] For a full English translation, see: Hyatte, *The Prophet of Islam in Old French*, pp. 38–95.

[121] Sergius and Muḥammad worked together to make the former into a king and the latter into God, according to a fourteenth-century chronicle: Anon, *Österreichische Chronik von den 95 Herrschaften*, pp. 72–73.

[122] Theft and plunder was a motivating factor for Sergius according to Pedro Pascual (wr. c. 1300). This polemicist made an inventory of traditions about the monk and was

tively, it was a strong longing for a religion with greater sexual liberties that drove the crazy Christian to instigate the creation of a new religion. Many such hypotheses appear in Western Medieval texts, and they obviously tell us more about their authors than about the history of Islam. In one of the earliest 'Muḥammad Romances', Embrico of Mainz (wr. c. 1100) calls Muḥammad's accomplice 'Magus'. This man is portrayed as a cross-breed between an ordinary magician and a Simon Magus-type who appears in the guise of a pious humble man but is bent on tricking his followers. For him the attraction of concocting a new faith lies in the abolishment of all the 'difficult' restrictions of the Gospel. He sees the whole enterprise with Muḥammad as a chance to introduce adultery and incest.[123]

Guibert de Nogent (d. 1124) viewed Islam in similar terms. While strongly condemning it as the utter deceit of Muḥammad and a filthy hermit, he also describes how the new Law was welcomed because it was a 'license for random copulation'. The strongest drive that the evil hermit of Guibert's fantasy had was revenge. The monk of his tale had earlier lost out on a chance to become Patriarch of Alexandria. Then 'scorned, torn apart by bitter grief, since he had been unable to reach what he had striven for, like Arius, he began to think carefully about how to take vengeance by spreading the poison of false belief.'[124] This theme, as it turns out, also runs like a thread through other Western depictions of Islamic origins. Many writers tell us that Islam can be traced back to the actions of a frustrated cleric who created a movement that was in all respects opposed to Christianity.[125] A famous version of the story can be read in Jacob of Voragine's *Golden Legend*:

> A very famous cleric, who was angry because he had been unable to obtain the honors desired in the Roman Curia, took flight to the regions beyond the sea and drew a great number of followers after him by his

one of the few Christians in Europe to become acquainted with the Muslim version of the story. He wonders how that story can be reconciled with the ideas about a heretical influence; Valénzuela, *Obras de S. Pedro Pascual*, vol 4, pp. 5–6, p. 29, pp. 67–80, p. 87, pp. 142–143.

[123] Hübner, *Vita Mahumeti*, (t); Hotz, *Mohammed und seine Lehre*, pp. 101–128 (tr). For a discussion this work in the light of popular hagiographical models of the time and the evolution of Muḥammad's polemical biography, see: Tolan, 'Anti-hagiography: Embrico of Mainz'.

[124] Levine, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, pp. 32–33 (tr).

[125] This vengeful Christian appears specifically as Sergius in a fourteenth-century German travel account: Röhricht and Meister, 'Ein niederrheinscher Bericht', p. 26.

> deceptions. He met Magumeth and told him that he wished to put him at the head of his people. He then put seeds and the like into Magumeth's ear, and trained a dove to pick them out. The dove became so accustomed to this that whenever it saw Magumeth, it lighted on his shoulder and thrust its beak into his ear. Then the cleric called the people together and told them that he would put over them the man whom the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, would point out. He secretly released the dove, which flew straight to Magumeth perched on his shoulder, and put its beak to his ear. Seeing this, the people thought it was the Holy Spirit descending upon him and bringing him the words of God. In this way Magumeth deluded the Saracens, and under his leadership they invaded the kingdom of the Persians and swept through the eastern empire as far as Alexandria.[126]

Jacob of Voragine dismisses the story as 'popular'. He prefers to focus on more serious accounts of the rise of Islam, which he calls 'closer to the truth', i.e. the stories about the queen of Corozan and about Sergius the Nestorian. His comments illustrate that the authors of our texts did not always accept all fanciful tales uncritically. Nevertheless, the majority of his contemporaries thought it to be quite plausible that the 'inventor' of Islam was originally a Christian. They even believed that he could have been a follower of the depraved Nicolaitans mentioned in the Book of Revelation (Rev 2:6, 15). The wicked vengeful character that fled from the civilized world to Arabia in order to devise a new 'anti-Christian' religion ultimately even appears as Muḥammad himself.[127]

This brief survey does not do full justice to the richness of the Western 'Muḥammad legend'. It is only meant to alert us to the impact that Theophanes' *Chronographia* has had in Europe and to give an idea of the fantasy with which this theme was continuously transformed over time. It also shows that any attempt to pigeonhole the wide range of

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[126] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, vol. 2, p. 370 (tr).

[127] For example, the brief reference in Brunetto Latini's *Book of the Treasure*: 'Et puis i fu li mauvais preechieres Mahommés ki fu moines, ki les retraist de la foi et les mist en erreur'; Carmody, *Li livres dou Tresor*, p. 69 (t). See also: D'Ancona, *La Leggenda di Maometto*, p. 218, pp. 236–237; Doutté, 'Mahomet Cardinal' and the B-text of Piers Plowman: Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, p. 190. The possible connection between Islam and the Nicolaitans was already considered many centuries before: Peter the Venerable already alludes to it. See for this theme: D'Ancona, *La Leggenda di Maometto*, pp. 206–219, and Ferreiro, 'Simon Magus, Nicolas of Antioch and Muhammad'. It was turned into a full-blown legend entitled *Liber Nycholay* in which Muḥammad himself is the heretical Christian who founded Islam. An edition and study of this text is now available: González Muñoz, '*Liber Nycholay*'.

stories in circulation, as I have attempted to do in the above pages, can be hazardous. As already noted, sometimes we simply learn more about the authors of the stories than we do about the subjects which they treat. In their minds heresy was tightly intertwined with licentiousness and deceitfulness. Hence every heretic looked more or less the same. This is how the monks of our tales, even though they display—from the point of view of the source material—an amalgamate identity, can ultimately become one and the same person, who was simply 'bad and mad'.[128]

### *Baḥīrā the Victim*

A particular theme that was spun into some sort of a sub-legend about Baḥīrā, again full of accretions and variations, concerned the cause of the monk's death. Dozens of the sources that we have already discussed in the pages above contain references to Baḥīrā's violent death when he falls victim to the brutality of the Arabs or the cunning of the Prophet. The oldest known sources to refer to the murder of Baḥīrā are two Armenian histories. Thomas Artsruni, writing in the early tenth century, describes in his *History* how Baḥīrā demanded some recognition for the success of his teachings. That was why Muḥammad felt the need to slay him: 'since [Mahmet] was proclaiming that his mission was from an angel and not from a man, he was very vexed and killed him secretly'.[129] Another tenth-century Armenian source, the *History of Aghuank'*, also blames the Prophet for the monk's death, but here the murder is described as a purely preventive measure at a time when spies were sent out to discover whence Muḥammad had received his doctrines. It is described how 'Mahmet' buried his teacher in the sand and sat right on top of him while asserting once more that it was an angel who spoke to him.[130]

A number of anti-Muslim writings of very diverse provenance make similar claims. For example, the Mozarab polemical tract *Liber denudationis siue ostensionis aut patefaciens* speaks of a Boheira, who was the first

[128] The characterization given by Daniel in his 'Crusade Propaganda', p. 56.

[129] Thomson, 'Muhammad and the Origin of Islam', p. 835 (tr), referring to the original text in: Thomson, *History of the House of Artsrunik'*, p. 168.

[130] Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, pp. 186–187 (tr). For this work and its possible compiler, see above: pp. 171–172 and n. 68.

disciple of the Prophet later killed by him in his sleep together with the Jew Pinehas (Finḥāṣ).[131] Ricoldo da Montecroce (d. 1320), who used the *Liber denudationis* as a source, does not relate the anecdote but nevertheless refers in passing to Baḥīrā as a disciple of Muḥammad who was killed by him.[132] The story must have been so well known in his time that he did not need to elaborate.

The Jewish philosopher Ibn Kammūna (d. 1284) from Baghdad also hints at this event in the context of a discussion about the proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood in his comparative examination of the three faiths *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth*. His chapter on Islam focuses heavily on the inimitability of the Qurʾan, as this was a crucial proof of Muḥammad's prophethood. Before actually going deeply into the question of whether the Qurʾan can be considered miraculously inimitable, however, Ibn Kammūna wants to discuss first of all whether it can be excluded that the Qurʾan was revealed to someone else. After all, it is of no use to discuss the inimitability of the Qurʾan as a proof of Muḥammad's prophethood if it is not certain that he was the one who actually received it. Hence Ibn Kammūna asks:

> Is it possible that another prophet, to whom the Koran had been revealed first, called Muḥammad to his faith and to this book, and that he was then killed by Muḥammad and, because the prophet's name was unknown, the book remained in Muḥammad's hands?[133]

His own answer to this question then rules out the possibility: there are too many references in the Qurʾan to the Prophet himself, the passage continues, to suppose that the Qurʾan belonged at first to someone else. Once this has been settled, Ibn Kammūna moves on to other questions about ways in which Muḥammad may have received his religious doctrines other than through divine revelation.[134] The opening question of the discussion is striking, since it mentions a 'killing'. At first sight it is vintage *kalām* inasmuch as it seems a purely hypothetical question, the answer to which justifies the subsequent narrowing down of the discussion. However, the actual mention of 'killing' betrays the fact that Ibn Kammūna was acquainted with the popular story and wanted to allude

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[131] Burman, *Religious Polemic*, pp. 270–271 (ttr).

[132] Mérigoux, 'L'ouvrage d'un frère prêcheur', p. 118 (t); Ricoldo da Montecroce, *I Saraceni*, pp. 144–145 (tr).

[133] Perlmann, *Sa'd b. Manṣūr b. Kammūna*, p. 70 (t), Perlmann, *Ibn Kammūna's Examination*, p. 105 (tr).

[134] Cf. pp. 119–130 for the question of the Prophet's informants.

to it. If the discussion was only about the issue of another person receiving the Qur'an first, then he could have asked whether Muḥammad had perhaps inherited, stolen, or simply found, the Qur'an. As we can see, there is more to Ibn Kammūna's question than that; by alluding to the popular story about the monk's murder, he draws attention to the fact that this question was not purely hypothetical in the eyes of his readers.

In Byzantium the story about the monk's death circulated as well. One of the Byzantine treatises against Islam, the *Religious Dispute of the Monk Euthymius with a Saracen*, also maintains that Muḥammad eventually killed his master. It adds the juicy detail that the killing happened while Muḥammad was drunk.[135] This particular idea clearly spoke to the imagination of many of those who liked to depict Muḥammad as a capricious opportunist, whose religious injunctions were irrational and based on trivial circumstances. Accordingly, they focused in on this incident as a way to present the particular reason why Muḥammad decided to prohibit the drinking of alcohol.

In the same vein, a number of Latin polemical writings about Islam trace back the prohibition of the use alcoholic drinks to Muḥammad's own death. The story was told of how the Prophet fell down in drunken stupor and was eaten by pigs—which then, quite predictably, also led to the ban on pork.[136] In the twelfth-century poem about the Prophet's life, the *Vita Mahumeti* of Embrico of Mainz, it is the tutor-monk (here also a magician) who declares the ban on pork after the Prophet is eaten by pigs.[137]

The story about Baḥīrā's death as the result of the Prophet's drunkenness was apparently so widely known that a cryptic foretelling of it, purportedly by Christ to Peter, sufficed for the reader in the eyes of the author of the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* ('The Book of the Rolls'):

> O Peter […] before his death he will kill his teacher whose name begins with the letter *S̄īn*. Because of this murder he will prohibit and render unlawful to himself a large variety of food and drink.[138]

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[135] Euthymii Zigabene, 'Disputatio de fide cum philosopho saraceno', p. 36 (ttr); Trapp, 'Die Dialexis des Mönchs Euthymios', p. 127 (t).

[136] See, among others, Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, vol. 8, pp. 68–70. For similar stories see also Tolan, 'Un cadavre mutilé' and Daniel, *Islam and the West*, pp. 126–127.

[137] Cambier, *Embrico de Mayence. La Vie de Mahomet*, p. 53.

[138] Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter', p. 322 (t), p. 254 (tr).

According to a twelfth-century Latin story about the life of Muḥammad, allegedly told to the author by a Greek man in Antioch, Muḥammad tried to accuse someone else of the slaughter of his master, who is no less than Nestorius himself.[139] More popular, however, was a story in which the roles are reversed: the blame for the murder of Baḥīrā shifted to Muḥammad's companions, who tricked him into believing that he himself had committed the crime. The idea was that the companions had in fact killed the monk, while the Prophet was drunk. Once he recovered from his drunkenness, they told him that he himself had killed his master. In this way the story becomes even worse than it was: Muḥammad is neither in control of himself, nor of those around him—neither cognizant of his own actions nor of the conspiracies of his fickle companions.

William of Tripoli (d. 1277) is one of several Latin authors who picked up this particular story in the East.[140] Sir John Mandeville, the pseudonymous fourteenth-century author who trotted the globe without ever leaving his library, used William of Tripoli's work for his chapter on the Islamic world and also described the cruel death of the 'gode heremythe that duelled in the desertes a myle fro Mount Sinai'. The motive of Muḥammad's companions, simply said to be envy in William of Tripoli's account, is clarified by Mandeville: 'And so often wente Machomete to this heremyte that alle his men weren wrothe, for he wolde gladly here this heremyte preche and make his men wake alle nyght'.[141] It is believed that *Mandeville's Travels* was the inspiration for the artist Lucas of Leyden, who produced an engraving of the murder scene in the year 1508. In a landscape that resembles Northern Europe more than Northern Arabia, we see Baḥīrā dressed in a Dominican habit lying dead on the ground, with next to him a Turkish-looking Muḥammad sleeping off his hangover. One of his companions is furtively putting the deadly sword to Muḥammad's side.[142]

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[139] Bischoff, *Anecdota Novissima*, pp. 120–122.

[140] Peter Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis. Notitia de Machometo*, pp. 200–201 (ttr).

[141] Quoted from the English version Seymour, *Mandeville's Travels*, p. 103 (see also p. 52). The story, which does not belong to the original *Polychronicon* of Ranulph Higden (written around 1363), appears in one of the English manuscripts. See the text of MS Harl. 2261 in Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon*, vol. 6, p. 39 and p. 41.

[142] The engraving is in the possession of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and is catalogued as *Bartsch* 126. A reproduction of it can be found next to the title page of Van Donzel, *'Ěnbāqom. Anqaṣa Amin*. Van Donzel discusses the background of Lucas of Leyden's engraving on pp. 146–148.

In Jewish sources the story is found as well. The earliest attestation of it is the thirteenth-century polemical work *Iggeret Vikkuaḥ*, written in Spain by R. Jacob ben Eliyyahū.[143] Other versions of this story came to the West through the accounts of two fifteenth-century travelers—Emmanuel Piloti (d. 1441), a Venetian merchant who lived for a long time in Egypt,[144] and the Dominican pilgrim Felix Fabri (d. 1502), who left a long account of his sojourn in Egypt and Palestine.[145] Traveling yet in another direction, the story also made its way to Ethiopia.[146]

This tale about the reason for the prohibition of alcohol in Islam is a clear example of 'etiological' polemics. Whereas the *Legend*, and many pieces of anti-Muslim propaganda that we have discussed here, try to explain Islamic doctrines as deriving from Christianity, Judaism or Arabian paganism, this tale about the drunken Muḥammad tries to give an explanation of an Islamic precept that cannot be traced back to any of these religions. The way in which that is done is by depicting it as the result of a specific set of circumstances. We may compare this to the polemical explanation of Islamic divorce law. The East-Syriac recension of the *Legend* alludes to the rule specific to Islam 'that when a woman is repudiated, if another man does not take her, he cannot return to her'.[147] This system, which is believed to have been instituted as a means to protect a woman from being kept in an everlasting waiting period by her husband when he wants to divorce her, is attributed to Kaʿb al-Aḥbār in the *Legend*. As it turns out, the Jews in the Near East also believed that one of their coreligionists was responsible for this law. If we are to believe the Jewish convert to Islam Samawʾal al-Maghribī, the Jews had a very specific polemical tale to tell about Islamic divorce law, namely that the early Jewish convert to Islam, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām, inserted this stipulation into the Qurʾan

143 See Mann, 'Une source d'histoire juive au XIIIe siècle'. The story reappears in two later Hebrew sources, the sixteenth-century *Seder Eliyyahū Zuta* and the seventeenth-century *Sefer Divrey Yôseph*. Relevant passages in: Shtober, 'Muḥammad and the Beginning of Islam', p. 331 (tr). See also Lassner, *The Middle East Remembered*, pp. 383–384.

144 Dopp, *Traité d'Emmanuel Piloti*, pp. 39–42 (t).

145 Felix Fabri, *Le Voyage en Egypte*, vol. 2, p. 565 (tr).

146 The Ethiopic refutation of Islam by ʿĔnbāqom (d. 1565), entitled *Anqaṣa Amin*, which was probably written originally in Arabic, describes the ploy in detail. The author also alludes to the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter*, when he claims that Christ had revealed to Peter that Muḥammad would rise to power and that his master's name would start with a *Be* and end with an *H* (Van Donzel, *ʿĔnbāqom. Anqaṣa Amin*, pp. 212–215, pp. 218–219 (ttr)).

147 See below: ES {22}, p. 305 and n. 108.

to make sure that Muslims would unknowingly produce illegitimate children.[148] John of Damascus, on the other hand, claimed that this law was instituted by Muḥammad himself, when he had decided that he wanted to marry Zaynab.[149] These are all variations on the same theme. Each of these texts is supposed to make clear that certain doctrines of Islam are random and accidental. Not only do these tales try to make clear that God was not involved, they also dismiss that these doctrines have an ethical value.

Often such an etiological drive can be discerned in the polemical narrations. On the other hand there are also enough endless fables about the Prophet which are best labeled as sheer satire. Authors who were eager to ridicule Islam turned another anecdote about the death of the monk into material for their stories. Apart from all the variations on the theme recounted above, there was yet another idea circulating in Christian texts about how Baḥīrā had eventually been killed. In the various versions of the *Legend* we read how Muḥammad calls his people together in one place to make them witness to the miraculous arrival of a cow that brings the Qur'an on its horns. This particular story became well known in the West as well; it was told, for example, by Guibert de Nogent. The story is obviously meant to give a satirical explanation of the name of the second chapter of the Qur'an. Even though that detail was probably lost on the Latin authors, they loved to recount the story as another example of what they saw as the Prophet's deceitful character.[150] This anecdote was at some point combined with another story about an alleged trick of the Prophet, of which the monk eventually becomes the victim. While the companions of Muḥammad are gathered in the desert awaiting the miraculous appearance of the Qur'an on the horns of a cow, the magic of the moment is reinforced by a mysterious angelic voice proclaiming that everyone should believe in Muḥammad. The voice in reality comes from a well, in which

[148] Perlmann, *Samau'al al-Maghribī. Ifḥām al-Yahūd*, pp. 57–58 (t), p. 58* (tr). In this passage Samaw'al reveals some of the vicious things which Jews say about Islam. As a convert to Islam he wants to distance himself from these accusations. For the theme of insincere motives of converts, see below: pp. 196–198.

[149] Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, pp. 138–139 (ttr); Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, pp. 80–81 (ttr).

[150] It is again a story that was embellished over time, appearing in increasingly fantastic versions. The animal bringing the Qur'an was also said to be a camel, a bull and even a deer. See for example: Vandecasteele, 'A remarkable account of the origin and spread of Islam'.

the monk is hiding. After the Qur'an has been brought by the cow, Muḥammad decides to sanctify the miraculous well immediately. He tells his people that it should not be used any longer and that everyone should throw a stone into the well. Unknowingly the people kill the monk and all traces of the author of the Qur'an are thus wiped out. It is to be imagined that the inspiration for this collective stone-throwing by Muḥammad's followers was found in one the rituals of the Ḥajj to Mecca, during which Muslims throw stones in Minā to repel Satan.[151]

The oldest surviving version of this tale comes from Thomas of Pavia, alias Thomas Tuscus (d.c. 1280), who is said to have read the tale in 'a very old book in the sacristy of a church in Bologna'. Gerard Salinger, who traced this motif of the well through Near Eastern literature, believes the story to be inspired by a tale about the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart (d. 1130), the charismatic Berber leader of the Almohad movement in Morocco.[152] An aide of the Ibn Tūmart had some men in a well proclaim that through divine inspiration he could distinguish people from paradise from those of hell. Afterwards he had the well with his accomplices inside filled up with rubble and started his campaign of helping the people of hell to their final destiny.

It is perhaps more logical to assume that the story about Ibn Tūmart was modeled on polemical legends about the Prophet rather than vice versa. Versions of it are still alive amongst Christians today. Its popularity was still attested to in the twentieth century, in Ethiopia, Persia and the Balkans.[153] Tito of Yugoslavia apparently knew a version according to which Muḥammad made a friend go down into the well with a copy of the Qur'an. Muḥammad lowered an empty stack of papers down into the well, which his friend quickly swapped with the real book. The 'miraculous' event then ends in the same way. Since this story makes more sense than the one which combines the cow miracle and the well miracle, we may ask ourselves whether it is not the original form of the story of the well. A similar version of it was narrated to me by Christians in Lebanon not long ago.[154] In it, it is not the monk who is buried under stones but the Qur'an itself. This is an interesting variation on

[151] See: Buhl and Jomier, 'Djamra'.

[152] Salinger, 'A Christian Muḥammad Legend', esp. pp. 322–323.

[153] For its popularity in modern times see Salinger, 'A Christian Muḥammad Legend', pp. 319–320.

[154] Daniel also remarks that the well story is still alive today in, what he calls, 'Oriental circles of little discrimination that are hostile to Islam'; Daniel, *Islam and the West*, p. 359, n. 61.

the theme, considering that it is no longer the author of the Qur'an whose traces are wiped out, but the original text itself. The story eliminates the conflict between the alleged authorship by the monk of the 'Ur-Qur'an' and the posthumous 'collection of the Qur'an'.

### *Jewish Traditions about Baḥīrā and Other Informants of the Prophet*

A brief discussion of the Jewish traditions concerning Muḥammad's Christian teacher is also appropriate for this survey.[155] They draw attention to the fact that many of the polemical traditions under discussion, whether Jewish or not, contain messages about the real and the imaginary relationship not just between Islam and Christianity but between the adherents of the three monotheistic religions. Ibn Isḥāq, for example, had hinted at the rivalry between the *dhimma* communities when he related how Baḥīrā admonished the Prophet's foster-father to take the juvenile Prophet back to Arabia to guard him against the malevolent Jews.[156] One of the versions of the *Legend*, A1, readily adopts this theme, which in its Christian setting serves an additional purpose: to insist that Muslims need to make clear distinctions between the good and the bad 'People of the Book'.[157]

This particular anti-Jewish note did not escape the notice of Jewish apologists, who, of course, wanted to describe the rise of Islam in their own terms. They proceeded to renarrate the anecdote with a new interpretation of the monk's intention. They portrayed Baḥīrā as a wicked Christian who consciously set up the Arabs against the Jews and hoped that the future Islamic power would bring about the destruction of the Jewish community. Heedful of this calumnious schemer, a group of Jews decided to convert to Islam in order to counterbalance the evil influence of the monk. The oldest text to describe this is the elusive *Qiṣṣat aṣḥāb Muḥammad*, a short tenth-century Judeo-Arabic text, which

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[155] Some of the Jewish stories have already been discussed in the section 'Baḥīrā the Victim'. This survey is in any case not exhaustive. Gil, 'The Story of Baḥīrā', includes most of the relevant literature, including, on p. 20, a number of references to articles in Hebrew, which I have not taken into consideration. To his survey need to be added: Shtober, 'Muḥammad and the beginning of Islam' and *id*, 'The monk Bahira'. See also the next section, pp. 200–201 for a Samaritan story about a monk meeting Muḥammad.

[156] See above: Ch. 2, pp. 38–39.

[157] See below: A1, p. 395.

is found also in a Hebrew reworking contained in a polemical treatise against the Karaites.[158] It lists the ten names of the Jewish sages who converted to the faith of the Prophet 'as to prevent him [i.e. Baḥīrā or Muḥammad] from harming Israel even in the slightest'.[159] They proceeded to write the Qurʾan and to interpolate their names at the beginning of the *sūra*s, without anyone perceiving what they did. Then, by stringing together some of the secret letters from the Qurʾan, the author of this story presents a Hebrew sentence that serves as the actual proof of the Jewish co-authorship of the Muslim Scripture: 'kakh yaʿaẓū ḥakhamay yisraʾel', meaning 'Thus did the wise men of Israel advise'.[160]

In this tale, the monk is first described as a stylite located in Balqīn, who sat on a pillar called 'the Sign of the Sun'. Later on in the text he is named as Baḥīrā.[161] That first identification is reminiscent of the monk in the *Sīra* whom the *ḥanīf* Zayd ibn ʿAmr consulted with during his search for the religion of Abraham.[162] His dwelling place was said to be Mayfaʿa in the region of Balqāʾ. There was indeed a monastic tower there, which survives until today.[163] This tale appears to be an inversion of Theophanes Confessor's description of the rise of Islam. In his chronicle he described how some Jews decided to keep their allegiance to the Prophet, even though they knew he was not the Messiah, as they had thought initially. Rather than abandoning his cause, they decided to feign belief in him so that they would have the opportunity to incite the Prophet against the Christians.[164]

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[158] For the Judaeo-Arabic versions see Leveen, 'Mohammed and his Jewish Companions', with his 'Additions and Corrections'; Gil, 'The Story of Baḥīrā'. For the Hebrew version, see: Mann, 'A Polemical Work', *id*, 'An Early Theological-Polemical Work', and Marmorstein, 'Die Einleitung zu David'. The Judeo-Arabic version of the text, which is found in several Genizah fragments, comes at the end of *Kītāb al-taʾrīkh* which refers to the reign of al-Muqtadir (908–932). There are a number of compelling reasons to believe that this was the history written by Saadia Gaon; if so, he may also have been the one to set this polemical tale in writing. See the detailed discussion in Gil, 'The Story of Baḥīrā', pp. 7–10. See also: Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 505–508 and Rosenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Auseinandersetzung*, pp. 372–377.

[159] Quoted from Shtober, 'Muḥammad and the Beginning of Islam', pp. 349–350.

[160] cf. Shtober, 'Muḥammad and the Beginning of Islam', p. 350, n. 13.

[161] That is: in the Judaeo-Arabic version which was discovered first. In the Geniza fragment edited by Gil he is called both Baḥīrā and Ḥabīb; see: Gil, 'The Story of Baḥīrā', pp. 16–18 (ttr). The Hebrew translation in the Cambridge Genizah does not mention the name. Cf. Shtober, 'Muḥammad and the Beginning of Islam', p. 350 and n. 14.

[162] For this tradition, see above: p. 45.

[163] Piccirillo, *l'Arabia Cristiana*, p. 232.

[164] De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. 1, p. 333 (t); Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle*

The motif of hypocritical conversions influencing the attitude of a convert's new religion toward his former faith is known from Jewish writings about Christianity as well. Some of the versions of the *Toldoth Yeshu* do this when they portray Peter and Paul as secretly remaining Jewish and working behind the scenes of Christ's mission on behalf of the Jewish communities, the former in order to prevent the killing and forced conversion of Jews, the latter in order to create clearer distinctions between the Jewish and the Christian faiths.[165] When such tales were narrated about the early development of Islam, either by Jews or by Christians, the polemicists could draw on what the Islamic tradition itself asserted—namely, that a number of Jews converted insincerely.[166] In the *Sīra* it is made clear that these false converts are unmasked and expelled from the community, but Jewish polemicists exploited such accounts to cast doubt on the integrity of its Scripture and its doctrine, as is the case in the *Qiṣṣat aṣḥāb Muḥammad*. The Jewish philosopher Ibn Kammūna, in his extensive discussion of the 'Proofs of Prophethood' as formulated by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), alludes to this idea. The mere suggestion that some people converted under false pretenses opened up the possibility that passages could have been added to the Qurʾan after the death of Muḥammad 'to impair the faith'.[167]

In Islamic tradition we find a number of tales which we might call the converse of this particular motif in anti-Muslim polemic, as they deal with people who believed in the Prophet but had reason to act as if they did not.[168] The central hero in these tales is Kaʿb al-Aḥbār. In the 'synoptic' recensions of the *Legend* this famous early Jewish convert is depicted as having a nefarious influence on Muḥammad who

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*of Theophanes*, p. 464 (tr). For Theophanes' comments on the Prophet's involvement with a monk, see also above: pp. 182–183.

165 For a discussion of this aspect of the *Toldoth Yeshu*, see Ben-Shalom, 'The Converso as Subversive', pp. 266–268.

166 Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 361–363.

167 Perlmann, *Saʿd b. Manṣūr b. Kammūna*, p. 96 (t), Perlmann, *Ibn Kammūna's Examination*, p. 141 (tr). Despite the neutral 'kalāmic' way in which Ibn Kammūna phrases this suggestion, it is clear that he has a tale like *Qiṣṣat aṣḥāb Muḥammad* in mind; otherwise this passage does not make any sense. The same is the case with his 'hypothetical' question about Muḥammad murdering the real author of the Qurʾan (see above: pp. 190–191). In the same passage he argues that insincere converts, with less subversive intentions, may have feigned belief in certain claims Muḥammad made, for example that he was predicted in the Bible. This was a well-known argument against the success of Islam, which was often used by Christians too. See above: Ch. 1, p. 18, p. 27.

168 In Ch. 1 (p. 18, n. 24), for example, I have drawn attention to the bishop of Najrān who admitted that he would lose his high status if he were to convert.

in the end corrupted what Baḥīrā had taught him.[169] Apart from the obvious discrepancy with the Islamic appraisal of this man, the *Legend* diverges from Islamic accounts, inasmuch as Kaʿb is considered to be a companion of the Prophet. In Islamic tradition he is believed to have come from Yemen and to have converted only during the time of ʿUmar I. The Muslim legends surrounding his conversion deal primarily with *taḥrīf*, the falsification of the Bible. In one version Kaʿb defends his belated conversion by describing how he was searching for predictions of Muḥammad's appearance in the Bible. The rabbis showed him only corrupted texts. Only when he discovered some verses crossed out in a Bible manuscript did he go to a monk named Bulukhyā—which is perhaps a vague reference to Baḥīrā,[170]—to inquire about these verses. The monk proceeds to reveal the true Biblical verses which foretold Muḥammad's coming, but only after having made Kaʿb promise that he will not convert to Islam after reading them. Kaʿb however breaks his promise and becomes a Muslim. After that a heavenly fire comes down upon the monk, who then accepts Islam, together with a number of rabbis.[171]

Many more examples could be given of such tales. They are peculiar pieces of literature, which below their frivolous surface produce glimpses of the highly sensitive nature of interreligious relations in the Near East. On the one hand the tales show how easily themes and texts could travel from one community to the next. On the other hand they bear witness to the fact that for a believer to cross the boundaries from one religion to another was a way to make oneself suspect in the eyes of both the former and the new coreligionists. The irony is that while these tales were designed to instill in readers the sense that they should stay with their religion, their transmission from one community to the next was probably in large part the result of their being in the hands of people who had themselves converted.

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169 All three of the synoptic recensions refer to it in {9}, ES goes into more detail about Kaʿb in {20}.

170 Bulūqyā is the protagonist in a story in the *Arabian Nights* and Thaʿlabī's *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*. He was a Jewish boy who had found the name of the Prophet in his father's treasury long before the actual time of Islam. The story can be traced back to Jewish converts and is in part a reworking of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. See: Horovitz, 'Bulūqjā' and Wasserstrom, 'Jewish Pseudepigrapha and *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*'.

171 Perlmann, 'A legendary story'. In another version it is a number of rabbis who each know of the secretly obliterated verses but refuse to become Muslims: Perlmann, 'Another Kaʿb al-Aḥbār Story'.

### *Baḥīrā the Forecaster*

A crucial aspect of the Islamic stories about the monk's recognition of Muḥammad, is that the monk knew that a new prophet was going to appear in the near future. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Ibn Isḥāq explained that Baḥīrā knew this because of what he had read in an ancient book. The *Legend* explains the monk's foreknowledge in even more dramatic terms, when it relates how the rise of Islam was revealed to him in a heavenly vision on Mount Sinai, which confirmed the prophecies about the might of the Sons of Ishmael found in the book of Genesis. In A2 the monk's clairvoyance is taken even further. There are references in this recension to the monk occupying himself with astrology, which allowed him to foretell that the downfall of the Sons of Ishmael is written in the stars.[172]

The notion that Islam was foreordained and that the monk had a special gift to know this is absent in most of the polemical accounts of the life of the Prophet surveyed in the previous sections, in which the genesis of Islam is presented as a haphazard affair. The idea that Muḥammad's Christian companion could foretell the future and see what others could not, does not fit into that picture. However, Baḥīrā's identity as a visionary or astrologer appears sporadically in a variety of polemical texts. One rather remarkable example is the Samaritan history entitled *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh* by Abū l-Fatḥ al-Sāmirī l-Danafī. Although compiled only in the mid-fourteenth century, this work incorporates several earlier sources, among which one or more from early ʿAbbasid times.[173] It relates how three astrologers, a Jew, a Christian and a Samaritan foretold the appearance of Muḥammad. The Christian is not called Baḥīrā in this text but ʿAbd Allāh and ʿAbd al-Salām, which appears to be somehow a confusion with the Jewish convert to Islam ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām.[174] The Jew is Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, who just as in the Christian polemical tradition is said to have converted already at the time of the Prophet, rather than after his death.[175] The three men went together to Medina to find the Prophet and to inspect his mysterious

[172] See below, p. 509.

[173] Levy-Rubin, *The Continuatio*, pp. 10–19.

[174] The manuscript published by Levy-Rubin contains these two names (Levy-Rubin, *The Continuatio*, pppp. 121–122 (t), pp. 46–48 (tr)), while the text edited by Vilmar only has the latter name (Vilmar, *Abulfathi Annales Samaritani*, pp. 173–174 (t)). Vilmar's text, in addition, refers to the Christian as a monk.

[175] Cf. pp. 198–199.

prophetic sign, the big mole on his back. When Muḥammad showed the sign to them, the Jew and the Christian are said to have become 'hypocrites' in their religion, while the Samaritan cleverly negotiated full protection of his community under Islam, which meant that he did not need to convert.[176] By stressing the divinely preordained invincibility of the Sons of Ishmael during their rule, which the three man had observed in the stars, the text presents the establishment of a treaty with the Prophet as a small victory. In this respect this work resembles the *Legend* too.[177]

In less a less elaborate way Baḥīrā's prognostic abilities appear in the *Liber Denudationis*, where Baḥīrā is a follower of Muḥammad who 'informed him of what would happen to him in regard to his destiny'.[178] This is either a faint echo of the Legend or of the stories in the Sīra. A Latin work which definitely echoes the Sīra is the *Notitia de Machometo* by William of Tripoli. The monk that appears in this text was said to have a received a revelation about the advent of the Prophet. Their first encounter is accompanied by miraculous phenomena.[179]

In a number of other polemical writings that we have already reviewed above, the monk is labeled as an astronomer in a distinctly negative context. In the Latin reworking of the *Apology of al-Kindī* as well as the Greek *Religious Dispute of the Monk Euthymius with a Saracen* 'astrologer' is just another label for a man whose activities were purposefully unorthodox and subversive.[180]

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[176] Rather than interpreting the reference to the Jew and the Christian as 'becoming hypocrites' (*anfaqa*, cf. Levy-Rubin, *The Continuatio*, p. 48, n. 16) simply as converting to Islam, this may refer to the men converting insincerely so as to influence Muḥammad in his dealings with the other religions. For this topos, see p. 183, pp. 196–198.

[177] For this apologetic aspects of the ways in which *dhimmīs* portrayed their negotiations with the Prophet, see above pp. 113–121.

[178] Burman, *Religious Polemic*, pp. 270–271 (ttr).

[179] Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis*, pp. 196–199 (ttr) and pp. 268–271 (ttr) for the related story in the related text *De statu Saracenorum*. As mentioned above, p. 165, William of Tripoli must have become acquainted with the story in the Levant.

[180] González Muñoz, *Exposición y refutación del Islam*, p. 44 (t), p. 193 (tr); Muñoz Sendino, 'Apología del Cristianismo', p. 401 (t); Euthymii Zigabene, 'Disputatio de fide cum philosopho saraceno', pp. 33–34 (ttr). Later examples include a sixteenth-century work, the *Anqaṣa Amin*, by the Ethiopian polemicist *'Ĕnbāqom* (Van Donzel, *'Ĕnbāqom. Anqaṣa Amin*, pp. 212–213 (ttr)) and the *Sefer Divrey Joseph* by the seventeenth-century Jewish historian Joseph Sambari (Shtober, 'Muḥammad and the Beginning of Islam', p. 332 (tr)).

CHAPTER SEVEN

# CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The survey in Chapter Six of the different types of Baḥīrā traditions in Christian writings about Islam reveals that there were many different ways in which the 'idea' of Baḥīrā functioned. It is striking to see how some of the motifs of these tales and 'histories' traveled at high speed around the Mediterranean. Zaynab's affair with the Prophet, the cow bringing the Qur'an, the violent death of Baḥīrā—these stories were so powerful that they propelled themselves forward continuously. Yet, it needs to be kept in mind that even if these ideas were recycled over and over again, they also acquired new meaning in different settings. One may be able to notice how the polemical tales are connected through the narrative elements and ideological notions they share, but one also becomes aware of the fact that the very diverse strands of the polemic need to be disentangled before one can truly appreciate the meaning of each individual text. The story of the murder of Baḥīrā is a good example. In Chapter Six I have shown how a range of different sources narrate a version of this tale. It appears most often as a story that seeks to entertain. It does so not only because it is sensational, but also because it instills in both writer and reader (or storyteller and listener) a sense of superiority, a feeling that one knows a scandalous detail about Islam that Muslims themselves are unaware of. To the Jewish philosopher Ibn Kammūna, by contrast, the story about the monk's death was relevant most of all as a *kalām* argument. To him it meant: do we really know that the Qur'an was not in the hands of someone else at first?

Reading the *Legend*, this very fact has to be recognized. Despite the many apologetic arguments, polemical innuendos and narrative elements that we can recognize in it from elsewhere, on the whole it is no exaggeration to say that a comparison with the many sources discussed in Chapter Six tell us more about what the *Legend* is not than about what it is. It is necessary to read the *Legend* from the point of view of its unique narrative framework and its own apologetic agenda. This agenda has been investigated from different perspectives in Chapters One to Five. It is a specific agenda that leans on one very important

element in the text: namely, the idea that the monk had received a divinely revealed vision on Mount Sinai in regard to what was going to happen in the world during the time of Islam. The *Legend* uses this vision in order to lay the foundations for an authoritative interpretation of Islam's purpose and meaning in the world. The apocalyptic vision is meant to prove that the Muslim conquests were predestined and that they are truly the fulfillment of the Biblical prophecy about Ishmael's offspring.

Then, by showing that the religion of Islam was a subsequent development whose contingency is found in the combination of alleged reverberations of Christian preaching with doctrines and rituals that are seen as concessions to an audience of pagan people, the *Legend* disentangles and ultimately separates Islam's might from its religion. The interpretation of Islam as a religion that can never supersede Christianity is subsequently vindicated, in the second apocalyptic part, in a more elaborate prophecy which shows its future downfall, before the final triumph of Christianity in the whole world.

Due to the self-assured spirit with which the author and redactors of the *Legend* present this picture of Islam's history and its place in the world, it is easy to read the text as a sharp piece of polemic. But below the surface of this overconfident rejection of Islam, the text reveals the dire need for a solid defense of the Christian religion. It is clear that there were many questions to be answered, not only in regard to how one could possibly believe in the power of Christ in a Muslim dominated world, but also more specific questions such as: isn't the veneration of the cross idolatry?, why do other Christians convert to Islam?, and why does one have to pay heavy taxes to a community that rejects Christ? Moreover, the *Legend* responds to questions which touch the very basis of its own story. If Muḥammad's religion has to be understood as partially misunderstood Christianity, then why is it so powerful? And if the monk was the source of the Prophet's knowledge, then why did Islam turn out to be so different from it? These two questions are reflected in *Letter of 'Umar II to the Emperor Leo III* and the *Letter of Hārūn al-Rashīd to Constantine VI*.[1] In the eyes of the authors of these letters, and the apologists for Islam in general, the power of Islam and the truth of Islam were inextricably bound up with each other.

[1] See the passages of these works discussed above: pp. 153–154.

There is no doubt that these specific propaganda points urged the author of the *Legend* to expose the roots of Islam in a defense that was cast in narrative form. The progress of time is a crucial aspect in the construction of the *Legend*'s defense against these challenging questions. The *Legend* shows how, where, when and why the message of Islam began to diverge from Christianity: simplification of doctrine, adaptation to the needs of the Arabs, influence of Jews etc. And it also shows how and why its victories are different from what Muslims believe them to be: they were predestined, they serve as a chastisement of Christians and as a reward for a pagan nation's conversion to monotheism, eventually the Muslim power will fade away once it has served its purpose etc.[2]

The building blocks which were used to create the apologetic structure of this Christian counterhistory of Islam were readily available in the ninth century. The Muslim view on heaven, Qur'anic verses which support Christianity, the justification of the imposition of *dhimma*—all these issues had already been employed as elements of Christian apologetic. Beyond that, some of the issues raised in the *Legend* were part of a lively debate specific to that time. The question of the veneration of the cross was debated more intensively during the eighth and ninth centuries than in later centuries, for example, because of the gradual process of the removal the cross from public view.[3] Similarly, as I have shown in Ch. 4.4, the question of the ins and outs of the Islamic afterlife was often an issue in Muslim-Christian confrontations in the ninth century. Therefore, as a number of scholars have already argued in the past, there is no reason to assume that the *Legend* was composed at a later date than what the apocalypse indicates, i.e. the time of al-Ma'mūn.[4]

It goes without saying that these considerations primarily concern the 'synoptic recensions'. The recension A2 is quite different and has to be understood as a response to them. When this reworking was made cannot be determined in any exact manner. The material witnesses are

[2] A close reading of the Legend which shows that the overarching meaning needs to be understood in light of the subtle interdependence of the apologetic arguments and its narrative structure can be found in: Lassner, *The Middle East Remembered*, pp. 364–376.

[3] Griffith, 'Image, Islam, and Christian icons', pp. 134–135.

[4] For more detail on the question on the dating of the 'synoptic recensions' proposed by other scholars, see above: Ch. 3, p. 87, n. 102.

proof of the fact that in the early 1200s this recension was in existence, but it may have been produced some centuries earlier.[5]

A comparison with the other recensions can reveal some interesting points regarding the purpose and argumentation of A2. Its main differences with the other three recensions includes a more negative judgment of Muḥammad and the Arabs, along with its detailed discussion of writing the Qur'an and the monk's regret about the outcome of his exchanges with Muḥammad. In several passages it is noticeable that the redactor of this recension of the *Legend* has recognized that the synoptic recensions had created a picture that was false. The rule of the 'Abbasids did not end after the 'seventh Hāshimite ruler'. Islamic rule on the whole did not disappear and the apocalyptic paradigm had clearly failed. The crisis provoked in the mind of the redactor of A2 by this realization, which probably also reflects that of many other Christians living in the Islamic world, is unmistakable.

This crisis called for a reinterpretation of both the *Legend* and the role of Islam in the world. A number of strategies of reinterpretation can be detected in A2. First of all it is striking to observe how the notion of the transience of Islamic rule is now expressed by Muḥammad himself. One of the first things that the juvenile Muḥammad tells the monk is that, despite the 'irredentist' rhetoric of his fellow tribesmen, he is worried about the prospect of conquering Syria. He believes that, as under the time of the Midianites, it will only be a brief success and ultimately end in failure.[6] In other words, it is Muḥammad who is the one who suggests that Muslim power could turn out to be short-lived and disastrous. The voice of Baḥīrā tells us then, by contrast, that Islamic rule will remain for a very long time to come, when he says to Muḥammad: 'By my life, no! You will not withdraw defeated. Instead, you will triumph and gain victory, and you will rule seven great sevenfold weeks.'[7] This is the world turned upside down: a Christian author putting the idea of the temporariness of Muslim rule into the mouth of the founder of Islam himself, only to have another Christian, the hero of his story, refute it. There is something wrong here. Why does the issue need to be addressed at all? If Islam is to last, then why could the author not have written a refutation of Islam without reference to the question of the length of Islamic rule? The answer

[5] See below: Ch. 8, pp. 242–243.
[6] See A2, pp. 451–453.
[7] See A2, p. 453.

is that the redactor of A2 was not creating new apologetics vis-à-vis Islam, but instead was trying to readjust the apologetics that had been constructed before. Clearly, Islam was not going to disappear very soon. So was the original *Legend* a failed enterprise then? The author of A2 expresses his concern about the possibility that it could indeed be a failure by letting the monk express his doubts as to whether or not he had acted against the will of God when he began to teach Muḥammad and created an inauthentic scripture for him.

It is the narrator who then counteracts that suggestion by drawing attention to the fact that God chose the monk to show him a heavenly vision: 'Hope for the mercy of God, the One who showed you His signs in heaven and elected you for His vision concerning many of His creatures.'[8] He urges Baḥīrā to find meaning and consolation in that very fact. The narrator begs the monk to resign himself to the fact that God willed the rise of Islam and at the same time the reader is asked to do so. Marhab's voice is ultimately the one that tells the audience to keep on believing that God's hand was behind the genesis of Islam.

Even though the forecast of Islam's downfall as presented in the synoptic recensions turned out to be wrong, the redactor still wants to draw authority from the idea that it was based on a divine revelation, and indeed, at the very end the monk confirms once again that the rise of Islam was predestined and that he improved it in comparison with what it could otherwise have been: 'Do not reproach me, neither you nor the one who reads it, for what I have done and committed, because I knew what I knew and comprehended, and I saw that he would rule and that his rise, his success and the accomplishment of his mission were inevitable, on the basis of what I had read, understood, heard and observed. So I wrote all of it for the believers and I obtained for them a treaty from him, as well as promises of his care throughout the days of his rule.'[9]

With the reconfirmation of the predestined rise of Islam and at the same time the clear indications that the redactor did not believe its might was going to collapse imminently, the text bounces back on the old question of God's design behind the Islamic chapter in the divine plan. This very fact reminds us of one of the points which Funkenstein made about counterhistory. As shown in Chapter One, Funkenstein identified counterhistorical works as works that have as their

[8] See A2, p. 517.
[9] See A2, p. 527.

primary aim to undermine the identity of 'the other' by overthrowing its accepted history. He then goes on to argue that any community that spends great effort in the deconstruction of the identity of 'the other' makes its own identity dependent on the constructed counterhistorical identity with which it replaces the real authentic self of the rival community. As he puts it:

> any serious counterhistory that will try to become reality turns at the end to destroy not only the identity of the other, but also the self-identity of the destroyer.[10]

This is because in the end both are inauthentic constructions built on a false foundation consisting of a manipulated image of the rival community. If such an inauthentic counter-identity is presented as a phase in the divine plan, as the *Legend* does when it insists on the fact of its hero's divine vision on Mount Sinai, it not hard to see how the subsequent dependence of one's own identity on it becomes challenging. It becomes a burden, because 'revelation' cannot be simply discarded when it fails to convince any longer, in this case: when it turned out that Islam was there to stay. One can only try to overwrite it, therefore, in the hope that in a new form and in a new light it might be made to mean something different. This is what the redactor of A2 has tried to do; A2 presents a clear picture of why Christians should reject Islam, but also opens up the discussion of why this movement willed by God can turn out to be a lasting phenomenon. The explanation for this lies in the argument that Islam is meant for the Arabs, who with their alleged lack of intellectual skills and spiritual aptitude cannot grasp the full truth, and that their scripture is a witness to that fact. This apologetic model urges Christians to view the difference between their faith and that of Muslims not primarily as a matter of right and wrong but in terms of superiority and inferiority. Although the view was conveniently based on the construction of the 'mind' of 'the other', it was nevertheless a major concession, because it put in question the universal validity of the Christian religion. Coming to such a conclusion at all clearly pointed to a crack in the Christian worldview—a crack that was caused by the fact that the original Eastern Christian counterhistorical image of Islam's role in the world had expired.

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[10] Funkenstein, 'History, Counterhistory, and Narrative', pp. 80–81. His compelling example is the 'collective self-identification' of many Israelis which is inextricably tied to the negation of the national identity of the Palestinians.

PART II

# TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE RECENSIONS AND THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

## *Some Characteristics of the Recensions*

### *Syriac recensions*

The two Syriac recensions of the *Legend* bear a great resemblance to each other, but also each contain some distinctive elements. WS contains an introduction before the beginning of the *Legend* proper, whereas ES has some additional passages at the end. In either case these passages are included with the aim of creating some sort of 'historical' context for Baḥīrā's life.[1]

WS contains a number of minor unique features within the main legend (i.e. {1} to {17}) as well. Some of these are subheadings, such as {6.1}, and glosses, such as the addition in {14.14}: 'The Ishmaelites confess to the Messiah in this manner, that he is "the Word of God and his Spirit"'. Some are brief elaborations of the second apocalypse, notably {17.5}–{17.6}, {17.70}, part of {17.71}, and {17.75}. A conspicuous difference between WS and other recensions is WS' inclusion of the passage {17.45}–{17.50}. Whereas A2, A1 and ES at this point have a general prediction of evil things in the world, WS predicts great building activity and forced labour. WS furthermore distinguishes itself by its use of the name Isho'yahb for the narrator.

It should be noted that the Karshūnī manuscript Mingana Syr. 107 also belongs to WS. It translates the Syriac word for word (in such a mechanical way that a word like ܫܠܡܬ, when it clearly means 'it fulfills', is translated into سلام, 'peace'). The Syriac syntax remains therefore almost completely intact. For this reason it has been collated with WS.

[1] See the notes to WS with the passage {0} (pp. 313–317) and the notes to ES at {20} (p. 299).

ES shares most of its text with WS, L and A1. When it diverges from these other recensions it is mostly for the purpose of abbreviation. It overlooks for example {3.34}–{3.35} and {6.4}. The unique section of ES is to be found all the way at the end, when after the second apocalypse it continues with a number of comments on Islam. It goes into more detail than elsewhere about Kaʿb's prediction that Muḥammad would rise from the dead and also describes al-Ḥajjāj's codification of the Qurʾan and the demon worship of the Arabs.

*Arabic recensions*

Of the two Arabic recensions, A1, except for its final part {18}, is very similar to what is to be found in the Syriac recensions, but it occasionally embellishes the narrative. Whereas, for example, other recensions state in {3.2} that whoever stays overnight in Mount Sinai is worthy of a revelation, A1 dramatizes this and adds: 'And I said: "will I find the way to this mountain?". They became silent and one of them beckoned to me and said: "I will tell you". Then, a moment later, he came close to me |4a| and said to me: "the bishop forbids what you have asked for, but I know a trick for you…".' This stands in contrast to all other recensions, the language of each of which can be characterized as economic and formulaic.

One of A1's unique aspects is its rewriting of the passage about Baḥīrā's recognition of Muḥammad. A1 makes Muḥammad come to Baḥīrā, as a boy, in the company of another boy, in {12.5–12.6}, which gives Baḥīrā the chance to recognize the elevated status of the former. It also adds that Baḥīrā told Muḥammad's fellows to protect him from the Jews, in accordance with Muslim tradition about the encounter. Many of the vicissitudes during the reign of the Sons of Hāshim are not described in A1, as its second apocalyptic section is much condensed. Another noteworthy feature of A1 is its abbreviation of the name of Muḥammad. It is written as م ('m') throughout. In {18} A1 continues with Baḥīrā's confessions about writing the Qurʾan and solving Muḥammad's problems with his followers. That part is very similar to A2.

A noteworthy aspect of A1 is the presence of Syriacisms in it. North and South are rendered by *al-tayman* and *al-jarbā* respectively.[2] The former is not unusual in Christian-Arabic, but the latter is. The translator

[2] In addition to the examples mentioned below, this is another difference between A1 and A2. A2 renders North as 'al-Shām' and South as 'al-barriyya'.

literally translated '*menhōn w-bhōn*' into '*minhum wa-bihim*'. The 'Sufyānī' is said to '*yaṭlaʿu khuyūl Banī Hājar yaʿummuhum bi-l-sayf*'. This echoes the Syriac expression 'to make ascend with the mouth of the sword', and *khuyūl* (sg. *khayl*), meaning 'horses' or 'horsemen' in Arabic, reflects the Syriac *ḥaylē* (sg. *ḥaylā*), which means 'armies'. At certain instances the translator appears to have guessed at the meaning of the Syriac text that lay before him. The 'yearling goat' that symbolizes the Sons of Joktan, becomes 'a bird in the likeness of a goat'. It is clear that he took *ṣeprāyā*, 'young goat', as *ṣeprā*, 'bird', and did not know the term *ṣeprāyā d-ʿezzē*, 'yearling goat'. Furthermore he did not recognize the name 'Ā'isha in the Syriac *ʿaysha* and hence gives *ʿĪsū* (Esau) in Arabic. These peculiarities are not to be found in A2.

A2 is very different from all other recensions in content, structure and wording. For this reason the other three have been designated as the 'synoptic' recensions. The following examples illustrate its specific character: (a) Baḥīrā does not die halfway through the story; after the discussion with Muḥammad about God, Baḥīrā gives a long list of verses that he wrote and with some of them he gives his brief exegesis and expresses his regret for having written them; (b) Baḥīrā relates the story in the first person (c) Muḥammad appears to Baḥīrā for the first time when he is already a young adult and his initial reaction to Baḥīrā's prediction of his reign is hesitant, because he knows that earlier Arab invasions of the Holy Land have ended in failure.

A comparison of the text of A1 with that of A2 reveals that these recensions are very different in wording and content up to a certain point only. The difference in content is obvious, since A2 is very unlike all other recensions. However, a comparison of the passages which the two Arabic recensions have in common reveals that also the wording of the two is entirely different. It is striking to see the dozens of passages which are the semantic equivalent of each other, but in which for almost every word a synonym is used in the other recension. Some examples of words and expressions that occur in the first apocalyptic section are the following:

| | A1 | A2 |
|---|---|---|
| beast ({3.13}) | دابة | سبع |
| I saw ({3.12}, *passim*) | ابصرت | نظرت |
| descended ({3.12}) | انحدر | نزل |
| stirred up ({3.11}) | تحرك | اضطرب |
| paradise ({3.15}) | فردوس | جنان النعيم |
| the corners of the earth ({3.14}) | اطراف الدنيا | ساير الاقطار |

The above table reveals the overwhelming unlikelihood that either of these two recensions derives from the other. Presumably they have been translated from Syriac independently.

At about two-thirds into the story, however, A1 suddenly starts to resemble A2. Whereas the sections of the second apocalypse in A1 and A2 have hardly anything in common up to {17.68}, after that they become almost identical, that is to say, towards the end of the second apocalypse and the ensuing confessions of Baḥīrā to Marhab. This abrupt change in its relationship to A1 is one of the grounds on which I conclude that A1 has integrated the tail of A2 to complement its story. Other arguments for this are the following:

– some words which also occur in the first apocalyptic section are rendered in a different way in the second. ʿĀ'isha is now spelled *ʿĀsha* instead of *ʿĪsū*. The yearling goat is now *ṣufrānā l-maghribī*. The color *yūrqoyā* is now green (*akhḍar*), rather than yellow (*asfar*) as before. Hence there seem to have been two translators at work.
– the narrative structure of A1 as a whole is absurd. The initial narrator, who is simply referred to as *mutawallī l-akhbār* in A1, and called Marhab elsewhere, first declares that he stayed with Baḥīrā *seven days*, after which he dies. As in ES, WS and L, the further story of Muḥammad's encounter with Baḥīrā is told by someone else, his 'disciple'. In A1 this disciple never reappears, as he is not the narrator any longer after the second apocalypse. The monk Marhab appears as a narrator, even though he has never been introduced. He declares that he stayed with Baḥīrā *for a long time* to write up his history. In addition, but contrary to the earlier part, Baḥīrā is still alive.

Turning to A2, one notes the contrast between it and A1. A2 has perfect narrative unity, and on that ground it seems unlikely that it has integrated the end of A1 into its narrative.

Both A1 and A2 have suffered from transmission without sufficient punctuation. This has created a great amount of variant readings, most of which seem to be more or less conjectures. At points where Baḥīrā quotes a Qurʾanic verse we can easily trace the correct reading, for example الاميين, 'the Ummiyyīn', where we read الامس, 'yesterday', or ثمود , 'Thamūd', where we read نمود, 'Namūd'. Some other passages are more difficult to understand because of this problem, although in the case of names, comparison with the Syriac versions is useful and can invalidate readings like 'Nāwūs' for Thebes and 'Nafṭān' for

'Joktan'. Especially the part of A1 which is related to A2 (which I will call 'A1b' henceforth, as opposed to the first half 'A1a') and its parallel text in A2, contain many variant punctuations to certain ligatures, as well as ligatures that closely resemble each other, for example مخسر and مكسر and مشكر.

The language of both recensions, as found in the various manuscripts, is Middle Arabic, inasmuch as it diverges from the norm of Classical Arabic in the way which is typical for the majority of writings of Arabic-speaking Christians. Many of these divergences entail morphological and syntactical aspects, such as the fluid, inconsistent use of case endings and the inconsistent conjugation of *verba mediae infirmae* and *verba tertiae infirmae*. Many striking divergences from the classical norm concern the orthography, e.g. the lack of diacritical points on the *tā' marbūṭa*, the sparse and occasionally hypercorrect use of the hamza, the use of dots under the *alif maqṣūra*, the spelling of *alif* with *madda* as two *alif*s, and the lack of distinction between *dhā'* and *dā'* as well as between *ẓā'* and *ḍā'*.[3]

*Latin recension*

The Latin translation of the apocalyptic material of the *Legend* has survived in two manuscripts, which are now in libraries in France. The oldest, MS Bourges Latin 367 (306), is from the late thirteenth century.[4] The second one, MS BN Latin 2599, is from the fourteenth century.[5] This translation, entitled *Liber Mariaon monachi de revelationibus factis Sergio Barre*, has to be distinguished as another 'recension'. It is a careful reworking of the *Legend*, in which the stress lies on Baḥīrā's

[3] For detailed discussions of the characteristics of this type of Arabic see: Blau, *A Grammar of Christian-Arabic*; Blau, *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic*; Knutsson, *Studies in the text and language*. The question to what extent it is legitimate to designate the Christian form of Middle Arabic as a distinct language ('Christian Arabic') is still the subject of debate. See: Blau, 'Are Judaeo-Arabic and Christian Arabic misnomers indeed?'. Since there is no indication whatsoever that the Arabic versions of the Legend were originally composed in an Arabic that was closer to the Classical standard, there is no reason to convert the texts into Classical Arabic. Samir's method for editing Christian Arabic texts (Samir, 'La tradition arabe chrétienne', pp. 74–85) is therefore inappropriate for our texts.

[4] A manuscript containing several prophetic texts. See *Catalogue général … départments*, vol. 4, pp. 84–85; d'Alverny, 'Translations and translators', p. 430, n. 32; and Burnett and Dalché, 'Attitudes towards the Mongols', pp. 163–164.

[5] Lauer, *Catalogue général*, vol 2, pp. 540–541.

vision. The narrative framework is supplied by the itinerant monk who finds Baḥīrā in the desert, as we know it from the other recensions. In contrast to other recensions, however, the text ends at {7}, when Baḥīrā dies. The vision on Mount Sinai is also more extensive than elsewhere. At first sight this text has more of a unified structure than the oriental recensions do. For that reason the editors of the Latin text assumed that it is older: 'Cette disposition est sans doute la primitive et, par conséquent, le texte oriental dont dépend la traduction latine était plus ancien que les versions qui, seules, nous sont parvenus en syriaque et en arabe'.[6] Others, including I myself, have expressed the same view.[7] However, the discovery that L contains elements of both WS and ES arouses one's suspicion that this is incorrect. If the oriental recension to which L goes back had been reworked into the larger *Legend*, which included the encounter with Muḥammad, it cannot be explained how L's text agrees at times with ES and at times with WS, which are recensions that are based on that longer story.

A thorough reading of L discloses that it is, in fact, a text which has extracted the apocalyptic parts from the long *Legend*. One can notice that passages of the first and the second apocalyptic parts have been interwoven, and that the seams and the flaws are still visible. The clearest indications of this process are the following:

– After the angel tells Baḥīrā what the symbolical animals stand for, this is repeated immediately afterwards by means of sentences that one can trace back in their entirety to the second apocalypse. This creates a repetition of names, the directions from which the kings will come, their deeds etc. For example:

> Post hec vidi lincem indutum vestimento sanguinis venientem a vento occidentali et dixi angelo: quis est hic, domine mi, et dixit michi: hoc est regnum filiorum Sapren quod ascendit et confringet tribum filiorum Ysmael in ore gladii. *Isti autem filii Sapren ascendent de occidente et erunt induti vestimento sanguinis*….[8]

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[6] Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', p. 133, cf. 132.

[7] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 271, p. 479; Roggema, 'The legend of Sergius-Baḥīrā', p. 120; Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit*, p. 128; Landron, *Attitudes Nestoriennes*, p. 74. Gottheil, who did not know of the existence of the apocalypse in Latin, also presumed that the text was constructed in two different phases, but he believed the encounter story to be the oldest. See his first publication on the Legend: 'A Syriac Baḥīrā Legend', pp. clxxix–clxxx.

[8] Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', p. 143.

One notices the repetitions. The first sentence belongs to the first apocalypse and agrees with {3.15}, the second (in italics) comes from the second apocalypse and agrees with {17.71}. Similarly:

> Post hec vidi currum fulgidum et resplendentem ornatum omni ornate specioso venientem ab occidente et dixi angelo: quis est hic, domine mi, et dixit michi: hoc est regnum Romanorum et regnabit post omnia regna mundi et non poterit ei aliquid resistere quia datum ei vexillum cruces, cuius virtus numquam confringetur et ipsa est crux sancta in qua pependit Christus saluator mundi. *Veniet enim rex ab occidente et regnabit super totam terram*….[9]

Here {3.19} and {17.100} have been glued together. The same phenomenon can be observed in the predictions about the Sons of Hāshim, Mahdī b. ʿĀ'isha, and the Green King.

– In the other recensions there are more events predicted in the second apocalypse than in the first. The second apocalypse is not a real vision; it is Baḥīrā who prophesies. The elements which are unique to this part, like the appearance of Gog and Magog and the Angel of Wrath, have been inserted into L's apocalypse, but there is no proper 'vision' of these figures in L (in the sense of the formula 'then I saw…. and the angel said to me: this is…').[10]

Of course there is no way of knowing, until we find new evidence, whether this shorter recension was made in Latin from a longer text that had been translated into Latin before, or whether such an abridged recension of the *Legend* already existed in its original language. In any event, a Latin translation of the remaining parts of the *Legend* has as yet not been discovered.

This brings us to the question of its transmission process. Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida thought that the text was undoubtedly translated from Arabic, since it would have been hard to find someone who knew Latin and Syriac.[11] Their principal argument was that the name of the narrator is 'Mariaon' in the Latin text, which, according to them, is closer to the Arabic name Marhab than the Syriac Ishoʿyahb. However, the fact is that Mar Yahb does occur in one of the two Syriac recensions, namely ES. It is only WS that has Ishoʿyahb. Taking into account what the editors claimed about the Latin recension, i.e. its

[9] Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', p. 146.
[10] Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', p. 146.
[11] Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', pp. 133–134.

being an earlier stage of its development than other ones we know, we must add that their argument was invalid to start with, since they compared the text with texts that according to their scenario did not exist yet. This differentiation of names could only have taken place after the first enlargement of the supposed shorter version, because all other recensions share large parts which L does not have, so they would need to have had a common ancestor that is later than that supposed shorter version.

But are there other arguments in favor of the assumption that the Latin translation was made from Arabic? Except the general notion of likelihood, I cannot find any. On the other hand, the text has traces of Syriac in it, which could indicate a translation from Syriac.

To remain with the issue of the narrator's name, Mariaon is indeed closer to the Syriac form than the Arabic, because of the 'i' in it (cf. Maryahb vs. Marhab). Furthermore, the appearance of the goat (see {3.16}/{17.73}) is explained by the angel as symbolizing 'semen Iacob'. This is more likely a mistranslation of the Syriac 'Joktan' than of the Arabic 'Qaḥṭān', because of the similarity of the first half of the name. About them it is said that they come 'ad terram regni'. This looks like a misunderstanding of the Syriac expression for the Promised Land, *arʿā d-mūlkānā*, misreading the last word as *malkūtā*. The name for the Persian emperor is 'Conseron'. Its ending in 'n' resembles the Syriac 'Kesron', not the Arabic Kisrā.[12]

Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida have raised the question of how the text made its way to Europe. They suggested that it was transmitted in a Crusader context and they offered some historical parallels of apocalyptic texts being given by Eastern Christians to Crusaders.[13] Although there is no firm ground on which to build a case for the translation having been made in the Crusader States, as they claim, the likelihood that the text was translated directly from Syriac into Latin evidently lends more weight to their hypothesis.[14]

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[12] Some of these examples I had already given in 'The Legend of Sergius-Baḥīrā', pp. 121–122.

[13] Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', pp. 134–137.

[14] As I already argued in Roggema, 'The legend of Sergius-Baḥīrā', p. 123.

## *Textual Genealogy*

Establishing a genealogy of the various manuscripts of the *Legend* can enhance our understanding of some of the differences between the texts and potentially tell us something about the *Legend*'s chronological development. In the following I will determine the interrelationships between the different recensions on the one hand and the different manuscripts on the other. I will begin by comparing the recensions, and then compare the manuscripts within the individual recensions.

### *The Relationships between the Recensions*

The relationship between the recensions is rather intricate. We have already noted some of the unique features of every single recension. A further comparison shows that every single recension has certain elements which it shares only with one of the other recensions. Such observations make us aware that there are no clear recognizable lines of descent from one recension to the next, except in the case of A1b, as we have seen in the above. In the following I will postpone the discussion of this final part of A1 and I will return to it at the end.

If we select some of the textual material that all recensions, including the short Latin recension, have in common, and compare it in detail, we can clearly prove that there is no direct lineage. A close look at, for example, the section about the 'Sons of Hāshim' in the second apocalyptic session, which is one of the few sections that all recensions contain, reveals the particular divergences of every recension. WS adds {17.18} and does not contain the reference to the 'ancient kings' in {17.28}.[15] ES is the only one to predict eight kings among the Sons of Hāshim ({17.9} and {17.57}). A1 does not include {17.24}, whereas A2 does not include {17.26} and {17.30}. The Latin text, on the other hand, lacks {17.14}. We learn from these divergences that none of the recensions can be simultaneously an ancestor and a descendant of one of the other known recensions, for it would mean that certain phrases and passages disappear in one recension and reappear in the next. For every recension we can therefore say that it can only be the first stage of the transmission of the known recensions or the last. In other words, the genealogy does not include a line of descent of

[15] In the interest of the readability of this discussion of the variant readings, I have translated the relevant words and phrases rather than showing the original words.

three of the known recensions. It would need to have a recension that takes such an intermediate position but we know that there are none that fit in such a position. But also a hypothetical line of descent which includes two of the known recensions and a lost intermediary, and a line in which a known recension occupies a position where it is preceded by and followed by one or more lost intermediaries, yield such impossible transitions. We can therefore say that all our recensions are either always positioned at the end of a branch or beginning. Since we also know that all manuscripts are younger than the common ancestor (as the oldest extant manuscript, the 13th century Latin one goes back to an oriental version of which we do not have the textual witness) none of the manuscripts in any recension can be the common ancestor. This conclusion already limits the amount of possible genealogies considerably.

As a next step I will sort through the differences by looking at readings specific to two recensions, without yet debating the chronological dimension. Hence my genealogical reconstruction is divided into two parts. First I will try to find the underlying structural relationship by isolating related pairs of recensions, without asking whether one pair represents a later development than another. This lays bare the underlying structure of the genealogy and can be depicted in an unoriented tree (or 'chain' or 'phylogram'). This analysis will be followed by a second step in which the tree will be oriented and become a stemma proper (or 'cladogram').[16]

Lachmann's one-step method analyzes common errors as a way to establish a stemma. Although this method has often been declared unverifiable and subjective, my choice for a two-step method is not based on a rejection of that approach *a priori*, but rather on the sheer impossibility of making any initial judgments about primary vs. secondary readings in the case of the material under discussion here. Because we know that we only possess the ends of branches, the detection of the underlying structure is the only possible step ahead. The second step is based on a more interpretative consideration of the variants. Obviously, a useful aspect of this method is the fact that the underlying structure remains intact when the second step is uncertain. As we shall

[16] This method has been described by Dees in his 'Over stambomen van handschriften' and is widely accepted today. For the history of this method and a very lucid discussion of its advantages see: Salemans, *Building Stemmas with the Computer*.

see below, even the underlying structure can reveal a number of interesting facts that are independent of how it is oriented.[17]

A comparison of the textual material reveals that L and WS often have phrases and passages in common which the other recensions do not have. Some of the most striking examples are the reference in {1} to Mount Sinai, Egypt and Scete, the reference to different metals that symbolize the kings in {3.13} and {3.14}, the reference to the direction from which the green king will come in {3.18}, the inclusion of 'the Judge' in {3.34}, the prediction of several earthquakes in Babel on one day in {17.52}, the saying of Mahdī ibn ʿĀ'isha that he is sent by God to convert the world in {17.77}, the prediction of the destruction of churches in {17.84}, and the passage {17.95}–{17.99} which predicts that the green king will punish Christians who converted to Islam. WS and L also lack certain features which are shared by all others such as: the mention of 'the sea' in {3.12}, as one of the things that the first apocalyptic beast devours, and the list of the signs of the world's corruption during the time of the Sons of Hāshim in {17.35} to {17.43}.

One sees a primary division emerge between WS and L as a group and ES, A1 and A2 as another group. Two particular, and presumably interdependent, readings are an exception to this. Both in WS and A2/A1b there is no mention of the cruel treatment of children, which according to ES and L is part of the apocalyptic scenario. The latter two recensions mention that the Sons of Sufyān will smash children against the rocks in {17.72} and that Gog and Magog will force mothers to boil and eat their children in {17.108}. On the basis of the relationship between the recensions that we detect generally, we have to conclude that WS and A2/A1b have left these words out deliberately and independently from each other, perhaps because they were considered too cruel and therefore not reconcilable with the divine plan. The same phenomenon is observable in the different manuscripts of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, several of which leave out exactly the same statement.[18]

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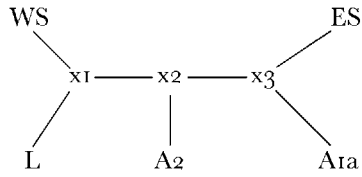
[17] The fact that we have several recensions and multiple languages means that the amount of truly comparable textual material is small. As we shall see below, that very fact also helps us to make some valuable observations concerning the transmission even from the unoriented structure. When comparing texts in one language and of one recension with the aim of reconstructing the archetype the unoriented structure is of little value without the second step.

[18] See the variant readings in chapter 13, paragraph 20; Reinink, *Die Syrische Apoka-*

A further comparison shows that ES and A1 also agree in a number of cases against WL and A2, as in the reference in {3.23} to the cross and the crown going up to heaven, which only ES and A1 contain. Similarly, the lack of reference to the light of the cross being seven times stronger than the sun in {3.7} is contained in both WS L and A2. A2 also agrees with WS against ES and A1 in {3.26}, a passage which L lacks altogether. A2 and WS distinguish themselves there by the remark that the vision was only experienced in spirit, not in body (that is: specifically in that section—it occurs elsewhere in the other recensions) and the mention of 'heaven and the heaven of heavens of the Lord', as opposed to 'heaven' in ES and A1.

These findings yield the following basic structure of the relationship between recensions:




This outline explains the appearance of features shared only by pairs of recensions without informing us about the chronological development of the recensions. In order to see how this outline is chronologically oriented we have to look at the texts again, and try to understand how certain changes evolved.

It has already been determined that none of the recensions (in the sense of the collection of extant textual witnesses, not including the lost earlier witnesses of these recensions) can be the one from which the other ones ultimately derive. This means that the common ancestor of all recensions lies at a certain point between any of the known recensions and the depicted 'junctures'. In order to trace the position for the common ancestor we ought to consider the different possible locations of it. These lie between:

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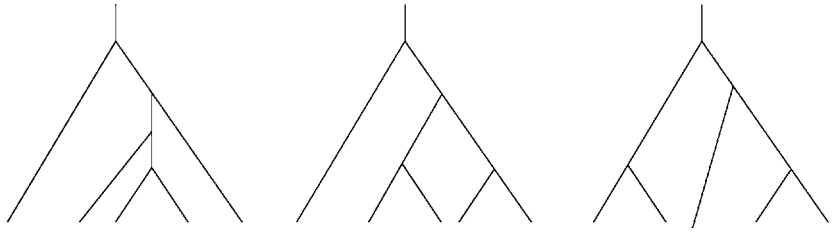
*lypse*, vol. 1, p. 42 (t) and the editor's comments to the translation in vol. 2, p. 68, n. 8.

– WS and x1
– L and x1
– x1 and x2
– A2 and x2
– x2 and x3
– A1 and x3
– ES and x3

The various tree structures that are produced when 'suspending' the unoriented stemma are the following three:



structure 1 structure 2 structure 3

This yields eight different possible genealogies once one takes into account that if the common ancestor lies between A2 and x2 there are two possible genealogies, while in all other cases there is just one.

We have to investigate whether we can falsify any of these. At this stage, our decisions depend on judgments of certain readings as being primary or secondary. I have numbered the different options as follows:

G1 between WS and x1 (= structure 1).
G2 between L and x1 (= structure 1).
G3 between x1 and x2 (= structure 3).
G4 between A2 and x2 (= structure 2) (WS and L's common ancestor predates the one of A1 and E).
G5 between A2 and x2 (= structure 2) (A1 and E's common ancestor predates the one of WS and L).
G6 between x2 and x3 (= structure 3).
G7 between A1 and x3 (= structure 1).
G8 between ES and x3 (= structure 1).

We can start by determining what excludes a certain genealogy a priori:

G1 and G2 if A1a and ES have a clear primary reading in contrast with WS and L (A2's reading is irrelevant).

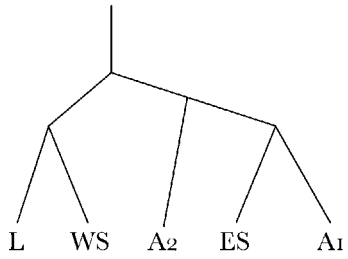
| | |
|---|---|
| G3 | if A1 and ES have a clear primary reading in contrast with WS, L and A2. |
| G4 | if A1 and ES have a clear primary reading in contrast with WS, L and A2, or WS and L have this in contrast with A1, ES and A2. |
| G5 | if WS and L have a clear primary reading in contrast with A1, A2 and ES, or A1 and ES have this in contrast to WS, L and A2. |
| G6 | if WS and L have a clear primary reading in contrast with A2, ES and A1. |
| G7 and G8 | if WS and L have a clear primary reading in contrast with ES and A1 (A2's reading is irrelevant). |

In any of these cases a genealogy is impossible. Let us look back at the readings which distinguish WS and L as a separate group. One of the readings these recensions share is the mention of the direction from which the green king comes in {3.18}. In light of the fact that so many other symbolical appearances in the apocalypse are supplied with a direction it is most likely that this is not an addition in WS and L but a primary reading. Their inclusion of a reference to Mount Sinai and Egypt and Scete in {1} is also almost undoubtedly original. The omission of it in A1 and ES, perhaps due to a homoioteleuton, interrupts the logic of the journey of the narrator Marhab (A2 lacks the whole passage). Another passage unique to WS and L is {17.95}–{17.99}). Although one could have the impression that this is an elaboration, I would argue that the description of the green king is too brief in the other recensions as it does not explain the disappearance of Muslim rule. It is easy to see why this passage would have been omitted, as it tells us that the green king will chase the Sons of Hagar to Yathrib, which seems erroneous, because this was already the role of the Sons of Sufyān, who precede the green king. That the Sons of Ishmael do not completely disappear after that is clear from the description of the rule of Mahdī ibnʿĀ'isha. The scenario of WS and L according to which the green king will fully destroy their power ahead of the advent of the King of Rome fits best in the apocalyptic sequence. These considerations mean that G4, G5, G6, G 7 and G8 are impossible genealogies.

Next we may consider whether there are any readings in A1a and ES that have priority over the others. A1a and ES include the expression of fear at the beginning of the first apocalypse {3.8}. Being a cliché in encounters with angels at the commencement of apocalypses there is no doubt that this belongs to the original composition. Furthermore, A1a and ES contain a long passage, also a stock item in apocalypses, of the corruption of the world in {17.35}–{17.43}. This

means that G1 and G2 are impossible genealogies too. G3 can however not be excluded because these readings of A1 and ES *are contained in A2 as well*. This means that G3 is the only tenable genealogy.

All things considered, we reach the following oriented genealogy:




*The Relationships Between the Manuscripts*

If we now want to locate the origins of the different manuscripts we can compare the variant readings among the manuscripts in one recension with the readings of the other recensions. The latter serve as a stable point of reference (something which I lacked when I compared the different recensions).[19]

East-Syrian recension

When we compare the three manuscripts of ES we can conclude that none can be the Vorlage of the other.[20] S is the oldest manuscript and it preserves a small number of correct readings, which sometimes agree with WS, and which have not been preserved in Q and R, such as 'West' rather than 'desert' in {3.12}, 'light' rather than 'fire' in {3.27}, 'body' rather than 'bones' in {7.1}, 'mouth' rather than 'eyes' in {10.7}, and 'Turks' rather than 'Tukānē' in {17.104}. Q and R have divergent, erroneous, readings in common in these cases. Yet, neither Q nor R can be the descendant of S, because S contains many omissions in a number of passages, probably due to hasty copying, which could not have been emendated by the subsequent copyists who produced Q and

[19] This stable point of reference is already provided by the unoriented stemma.

[20] Descriptions of the manuscripts can be found below at pp. 238–246. For the *sigla*, see p. 247.

R. Furthermore, Q cannot descend from R, nor R from Q. This can be concluded on the basis of the fact that they both share a small number of readings with S, at points where the other diverges. For example, R (erroneously?) adds the word 'there' in {4.6}, gives 'Jewish' rather than 'from the Jews', in {9} and omits the word 'wisdom' in {17.38}. Q omits the heading preceding {13.2}, gives 'plain' rather than 'wind' in {17.8}, and omits the words 'will impoverish and the poor' in {17.42}. Therefore we have to conclude that Q and R have a common ancestor in which these errors were made, and which is itself a descendant of S's ancestor.

Gottheil also had access to a manuscript fragment in private possession in New York, which I have not found.[21] I will designate it here with P.[22] Although S has been printed full of errors in Gottheil's edition, which does not make us confident about the reliability of the footnotes, we may, for the sake of completeness, try to determine the lineage of this fragment. The variants to S, which Gottheil gives from this manuscript fragment, show that its text agrees at times with S, when Q and R diverge, as for example in {14.15}, where both S and P add 'that man in whom God dwelled' and in {14.22}, where both S and P read 'who was crucified by the Jews', as opposed to 'crucified'. At other times it agrees with Q and R, when S has a divergent reading, as for example in {4.11}, where S reads 'light' as opposed to Q, R and P: 'fire', and in {15} where S omits the words 'if these things will happen to me'. Given that P agrees sometimes with Q and R, and sometimes with S, we can conclude that it cannot be a copy of any of these three and thus represents an earlier stage in the transmission. It needs to be either an ancestor of S, Q and R or a descendant of one of its ancestors. The fact that P contains readings, which agree with S, whereas Q and R diverge, means that P cannot be the *common* ancestor of Q and R, nor a descendant of it (because it would mean that the divergent readings in Q and R have been developed twice independently on the basis of that common ancestor, which is untenable). On the same grounds we can exclude the possibility that P is a descendant of an ancestor unique to Q or R. In other words, P's readings originate in a phase of the transmission preceding the common ancestor of Q and R. Could P *be* the common ancestor of SQ and R? We

[21] See below under inaccessible manuscripts, p. 243.
[22] Gottheil's siglum is 'C'.

can only answer that question by making sure that there are no readings in P which it shares either with Q and R exclusively, or with S exclusively (and which do not amount to obvious errors which could easily be corrected); furthermore, such readings must not turn up in other recensions. There is however such a divergent reading in {16.7}. Whereas in Q and R and WS and A1, Muḥammad refers first to the food and drink of paradise, before reporting the need of his people for other kinds of pleasure, S and P leave out the reference to the food and drink. This still makes a perfectly consistent dialogue and would therefore not have been restored by later copyists. This means that P goes back to a transmission phase between the common ancestor of SQ and R and S itself. The last question is whether P is the Vorlage of S. One can show that it is not, because P contains some unique omissions, which are not obvious mistakes, the clearest example of which is the omission of part of {17.3}. On the basis of this elimination we can now determine P's position as a descendant of a manuscript postdating the common ancestor of all Easter-Syrian manuscripts and predating S.

### West-Syrian recension

From among the manuscripts of WS, E is a manuscript with many variant readings. Most of these do not alter the meaning of the text at all—they are mostly slight elaborations, as is the case for example in {3.4}, in which it is said about Mount Sinai that no one is allowed 'to go up and sleep there'. E reads: 'to go up and stay there and sleep at night'. Similarly, in {3.37} it is said of the four rivers of paradise that 'they give life to the whole of creation'. E reads: 'they give life and they water the whole of creation'. These variants are important if one is to determine that E was not the Vorlage of the other manuscripts, as they do not occur anywhere else. Some of E's variants are significant for another reason, as they reveal that E is closer to the other recensions than the other manuscripts of the West-Syrian recension are. For example: in {3.2} E mentions that whoever stays overnight on top of Mount Sinai 'is worthy of a divine revelation', as opposed to 'is worthy of a certain revelation from heaven'; in {3.7} E mentions the cross which gives light to 'the whole of creation', as opposed to 'the whole world'; in {3.38}; E has 'angel', as opposed to 'seraph'; in {3.20} E includes 'dragon', as opposed to 'snake'; in {12.1} Baḥīrā predicts according to E that 'something great' will become of Muḥammad, against 'a great

man' in the other West-Syrian manuscripts; in {14.9} all West-Syrian manuscripts, except E, omit 'And Muḥammad said: 'What is the Holy Spirit?'''; in {15.4} E mentions the cross on which 'Christ, Savior of the World' was crucified, in agreement with East-Syrian and against the West-Syrian reading 'Christ, our Savior'; in {17.28} E mentions 'the ancient kings', which all other recensions contain, whereas none of the other West-Syrian manuscripts do. We can therefore conclude that E has an ancestor that predates all other manuscripts.

Comparing B and C with E, we see that in {2.2} an error occurred at some point, either only in B, or in its ancestors also, as it says that Sergius 'was called 'Baḥīrā' and 'prophet' by Hagar'. This obviously has to be 'by the Sons of Hagar', which is frequently used for the Arabs in this recension. That is also the reading of E. Yet C has 'Hagarenes'. We may therefore assume that C, or one of its ancestors goes back to a manuscript in which 'Sons of' was missing, which has subsequently been corrected. C's Vorlage cannot have been B, because B had already been transported to Europe by Sachau, when C was produced in Mardin. So C has to be a descendant of an ancestor of B, or of a descendant of B. The latter option can be excluded, because C agrees with E against B in more than fifty cases. Some of these are simple orthographic conformities, the omission of one letter or of 'Rabban' before Sergius, but in at least ten cases C and E contain the same prominent omission or addition. The omissions include 'they buried him' in {9.5} and 'true' in {14.5}. Additions include 'period' in {2.5}, 'they paid honor to him' in {9.5}, 'my parents' in {10.5}, and 'trees' in {14.11}. These observations lead us, first of all, to conclude that C descends from an ancestor of B. When we then take into account the finding that E often agrees with the East-Syrian recension against B and C, we can postulate a common ancestor of C and B that postdates the common ancestor of B and E.

Following the same heuristic lines we can determine the position of F, the Karshūnī manuscript of the West-Syrian version. In many of the cases where C and E stand out against B, we cannot compare these variants with F, because the Arabic does not show which Syriac form underlies it. Yet, in many other cases we can see clearly that F is much closer to B than to any other manuscript. In at least twenty cases F agrees with B against C and E. Since F is Karshūnī it is unimaginable that it was the Vorlage of B. That B is not the Vorlage of F can be known from the colophon of F, which tells us that it was copied from a manuscript of the year 1584. Do B and F share an ancestor? No

prominent cases of F agreeing with C and E can be found. However, the comparison does bring out a small number of agreements between F and E against C and B, and between F and C against B and E. With E it shares a homoioteleuton in {17.33} and the rendering 'persecution' as opposed to 'persecutors' of the other manuscripts in {6.8}. With C it shares the omission of 'humble' in {3.14}, of 'escape' in {17.97} and the more logical rendering 'how' instead of 'where' in {14.21}. These agreements would not be coincidences if F were a descendant of the common ancestor of B and C. However, that positioning would yield a much larger amount of coincidences of agreements between B and F and C and E respectively, and is therefore very unlikely. The position of F as a sibling of B is therefore the most compelling hypothesis.

This leaves us with D, which has not been discussed so far. It is a modern manuscript which contains a text whose contents reflect a comparative reading of several unidentified manuscripts; its sporadic footnotes and parenthesized words make this point clear. Its readings are generally very close to C and E, when they diverge from B and F. This leads us first of all to conclude that neither B nor F were the Vorlage for D (which is also historically impossible because B and F were already in Europe when D was produced). It cannot be a descendant of E either, because as we have seen, E contains many readings which do not occur in any of the other West-Syrian manuscripts. A further comparison reveals that D cannot have had C as its Vorlage either. C misses several words from time to time which D does contain, as can be seen in {4.4}, {17.57} and {17.90}. Likewise D cannot be the Vorlage of C, since D contains some unique readings, as for example the omission of 'holy' in {2.7} and 'of the Persians' in {4.4}, and the addition of the words 'monk' in {2.6}, 'angel' in {3.13} and 'on the earth' in {3.19}. C and D however also share some readings between the two of them. The most striking of these is the omission of several lines in {16}–{16.2} due to a homoioteleuton. Other examples are the omission of the words 'prophet' in {14.23} and 'something' in {11.2}, and the addition of 'all of them' in {14.5}. We can therefore conclude that C and D have a unique common ancestor.

### Short Arabic recension

Of this recension only three manuscripts are known to exist. Two manuscripts, T and U, have been included in the edition and they are

closely related.[23] There is little doubt that U is the Vorlage of T. In certain places where U has a hole in its paper, T leaves a space blank.[24] Because U is missing a leaf and is damaged due to its restoration, preference has nevertheless been given to T as the *manuscrit de base*.[25]

## Long Arabic recension

A2 is represented by six accessible manuscripts, five of which have been used for the edition.[26] There are also two fragments in Judeo-Arabic, which will be discussed below.[27] Of the six manuscripts, Y contains a number of readings which are related to readings in other recensions, and which other manuscripts of A2 do not have. Some examples of readings which Y shares with other recensions are the following. In {3.13} Y has a number of elements which it shares with other recensions, and which have disappeared in the transmission of the other manuscripts. One of these concerns the black beast in the first apocalypse, to which it adds 'and it came from the direction of al-Shām'. Another case is the phrase 'it ate the East and the West', to which Y adds: 'and the desert and al-Shām and the sea'. When the other manuscripts say the beast 'has' three horns, Y has 'on its head were'.

In {13.1} A2 has a unique passage about the history of Gideon and the Midianites, which precedes the conversation about God between Baḥīrā and Muḥammad. Y is much more elaborate here and predicts Muḥammad's future in greater detail. Several of the elements in this passage in Y agree with the other recensions, such as the prediction of twenty-four kings, and Muḥammad's name being mentioned in all corners of the earth. They agree broadly speaking with {14}–{14.3}—a section which is otherwise not to be found in the manuscripts of

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[23] As for the third, see p. 245 below for the list of manuscripts not used in the editions.

[24] Boisset's assumption that T is older than U can therefore not be maintained. Boisset, 'Compléments à l'édition', p. 126.

[25] See p. 240, p. 248, n. 39 below for the destructive 'restoration' of U.

[26] The MS Vat. Ar. 176 has not been included, see p. 232 below for an explanation of this decision. See also below for two fragments from a Judeo-Arabic manuscript.

[27] See below, pp. 233, 242–243. Because these fragments were discovered after I finished this chapter, they will be discussed at the end of this subsection; the discussion of the interrelationship of the other manuscripts does not yet take these fragments into consideration.

A2. This means that Y cannot be a descendant of one of the other manuscripts. Could it be the ancestor of the other manuscripts? Apart from the fact that Y is in all likelihood not as old as some of the other manuscripts, and the fact that Y contains so many small elaborations that would all have had to disappear again in the hypothetical ancestors of the other manuscripts, we can note the fact that Y contains a homoioteleuton in {16.17} and has changed 'father' into 'grandfather' in {17.68}. The other manuscripts do not follow this and are therefore closer to the reading in E and L. A similar case is to be found in {17.70} where Y misses 'kingdoms will rise'. We can conclude that all the other manuscripts have a common ancestor, which Y does not have. This ancestor, in turn, has an ancestor in common with Y.

When looking at the other manuscripts the first observation to make is that V and W are nearly identical. W is younger than V and lacks some essential words from time to time which V has, so V cannot be a copy of W. That W is in all likelihood a copy of V can be argued on three grounds. The two manuscripts contain the same four texts. W never has a reading in common with the other recensions which V does not have. In {18.34} V has spilt a little ink when writing the *ʿayn* in the word *al-muddaʿī*. W writes this word erroneously as *al-muddahī*.

Next, one notices the closeness of X to V and W. These three manuscripts agree in numerous cases against the others. A few examples:

In {16.28} they have 'the ugly' as opposed to 'Christ'.
In {16.23} they have 'because they' as opposed to 'and he said to me'.
In {17.43} they omit 'or plague'.
In {16.19} they omit 'who advocate'.
In {17.40} they have 'the fathers' rather than 'their fathers'.
In {16.26} they have 'our book' instead of 'the book'.

By far the most prominent common feature of V, W and X is the misplacement of a passage in {16.17}. They integrate a passage there which belongs to the end of the legend ({18.12}–{18.26}), where it is once again copied by these three manuscripts.

How do V, W and X relate to each other? That neither V and W, nor any other manuscript can descend from X is obvious, since X, because of its skipping over sentences consistently, represents such a mutilated text that it loses its sense in many passages. Could X, however, be a descendant of V and W? This seems possible at first sight because all sections of the text, which X *does* contain, are extremely close to V and W. However, V and W have a different phrasing from the rest of the

manuscripts in {18.9}–{18.11}. That is to say that X agrees there with the others against V and W. This leads us to conclude that X descends from an ancestor of V and W's ancestor.

The next question is then how Z, the *manuscrit de base* for the edition of this recension, relates to the other manuscripts. A look through the variants reveals first of all that Z cannot be an ancestor of VW and X because in numerous cases it contains unique readings, which stand in contrast to all the other manuscripts, and which are not obvious errors that may have been corrected by descendants. For example in {11.6} Z reads 'and his name will be Muḥammad, and he will be praised' (or: and his name will be Muḥammad and Yaḥmad'). All other manuscripts have a more elaborate reading here: 'and his name will be سوجامس' (VWX) / محرما سين (Y) and its explanation is: 'Aḥmad and Muḥammad'. In {16} Z reads 'I have no book in my hand' as opposed to 'I do not know a book' found in all other manuscripts. In {18.34} Z reads 'guilty' as opposed to 'my sins'. In light of the agreement of Y with V, W and X against Z, we can conclude that it is impossible that V, W and X descend from Z.

Similarly, Z cannot be a descendant of any of V, W or X, because of its agreements with Y against those manuscripts (as we can see from the examples of the agreements of V, W and X above). Combining these facts with what has been pointed out above (that is: the fact that all except Y have a common ancestor, which on its turn has an ancestor in common with Y) Z's position becomes clear. It must be a descendant of the common ancestor of all except Y.

The text contained in MS Vat. Ar. 176 is designated as M. I have removed its variants from the apparatus, because they are predominantly scribal errors, some of which give the reader the impression that the MS has not been copied by an Arabic speaker. One finds for example: الاخط for لا يحاط ; السانى for لساني ; توفيقني for توفيتني ; الاناعن for الاناء ; فجازيته خيرا for تجيربه حيرا ; كنت for كتن ; بيعة for بعية ; ربوبية for ركويته. Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness, I will determine its position in the genealogy of the manuscripts. The variants of M show that it is closer to X, V and W than Z and Y. It has, for example, 'the ugly' as opposed to 'Christ' in {16.28} and 'you will leave' as opposed to 'you will settle' in {6.5}. It also shares certain readings with X against the rest, such as 'that will rip them apart' in the feminine in {18.35} and 'we belie' as opposed to 'I made miserable' in {18.36}.

Since both X and M have their own peculiar errors which impede proper understanding of the text, it is obvious that they are end points

in the transmission and that neither can directly descend from the other. Their common readings should therefore be explained as resulting from their descent from an ancestor that is unique to them.

After finishing the edition, my attention was drawn to two Judeo-Arabic fragments from the Cairo Genizah,[28] which together contain one third of the text ({16.19}–{17.13}) and are referred to together as J. Unfortunately the text is teeming with errors. The Vorlage was badly and/or sparsely punctuated and the copyist tried to supply the *rasm* with diacritical points to give meaning, but often failed to make sense of the text, also due to a lack of knowledge of Christian and Muslim terminology. There are numerous examples such as Muhammad being taught a ناموسا (divine Law) versus بامور شتا (sundry things). The latter has a sound but totally different meaning. A collation with the edition of A2 yielded more than 400 variant readings and close to none of these readings added to our understanding of the evolution of the text. This was the reason to discard practically all of them. However, the text deserves special attention, because its carrier is older than any of the other manuscripts.[29] One ought to presuppose that even if the text is rather corrupt, it could contain sounds readings that bear witness to an earlier stage in the evolution of A2, which have been lost in the later manuscript. A small number of these can be found. These are the only ones to have been indicated in the edition. Clear examples are the disappearance of one phrase in all manuscripts except J due to a homoioteleuton in {16.24} and the correct readings فايد in {16.20} and تلامده in {16.28}. The presence of these readings suggests that J descends from an ancestor common to all manuscripts. In a small number of cases J corresponds to Y (e.g. omission of the word 'paradise' in {16.22}, the correct addition of 'from Him' before 'emanating' in {16.12} and the inclusion of one extra line in the description of the prayers in the same section). It is impossible, however, that J and Y share a unique ancestor, because of the small number of original readings that J has, and the common readings between J and Y are therefore to be explained as preceding the common ancestor of all other manuscripts in which the divergence must have taken place.

[28] I want to thank Kristina Szilágyi for alerting me to the existence of these fragments.

[29] See below, p. 242.

## Latin recension

Of the two surviving manuscripts of the Latin recension, the fourteenth century manuscript from the Bibliothèque Nationale [Lp] has been edited. Only after the publication of this text was the thirteenth century manuscript [Lb] discovered. The texts are very similar. The latter offers a few readings that are closer to the Syriac and Arabic recensions. One notices, for example, that in {1} it includes the reference to Egypt and Scete, which Lp has lost due to a homoioteleuton.[30] It could be the Vorlage of Lp, but this is not certain. Lb refers in the introduction to the 'Sons of Israel', whereas Lp has the correct 'Sons of Ishmael'. This may be a sign that Lp is not a copy of Lb.[31]

## Short Arabic Recension, section A1b

Lastly we need to consider the ancestry of A1b, the part from {17.68} onwards that has been taken from A2.[32] The question is from what stage in the transmission of A2 the ancestor of A1b stems. We can compare A1b with the end of the second apocalypse in the other recensions (i.e. the part which they all share) to see whether there are similarities between A1b and the other recensions in passages where A2 diverges. Such instances are, however, not to be found. This forces us to turn to the part after the second apocalypse, i.e. {18}. Because this part does not exist in other recensions we have no material for comparison. But we can find some other clues. Reading A1b alongside the manuscripts of A2 we see that A1b is often close to Y against all other manuscripts. In {18.29} Y and A1b read مدنب as opposed to the manuscripts in A2 that read: مرتب and مريب. In {18.35} A1b and Y have the additions تلدغوهم ('that bite them'), and تلسعوهم ('that burn them') respectively. In the same passage Y mentions predators تفسدهم 'that waste them'. This goes back to the correct reading in A1b

[30] Lb: *et intraui egyptum, et uisitaui solitudinem scithi, et postea intraui solitudinem interiorem* (MS Bourges Latin 367 (306), fol. 22 vb), as opposed to Lp: *et intraui solitudinem interiorem* (Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', p. 139). I am grateful to Redmer Alma for transcribing the text of the Bourges manuscript.

[31] Lb deserves to be edited because of these fuller readings. I have not done this, thinking that it is worthwhile to investigate first the existence of additional manuscripts.

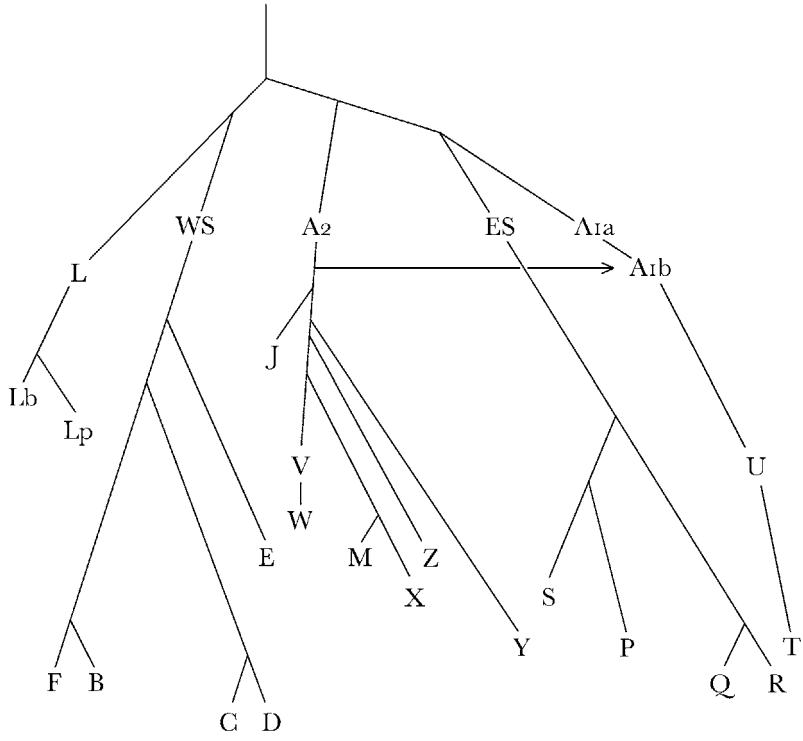
[32] See pp. 214–215 for the distinction between the two parts of A1.

تفترسهم ('that devour them'), whereby Y misread the ر for a د. The other manuscripts have used a form of the root كسر instead.

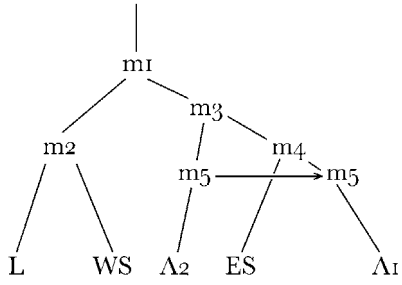
This analysis leads us to the conclusion that A1b cannot descend from a manuscript that descends from the common ancestor of VWXZ or one of its descendants. We can also easily determine that A1b cannot descend from Y because of Y's many unique more elaborate readings. This means that there are three possibilities left: (a) A1b descends from an ancestor predating the common ancestor of all A2 manuscripts, (b) A1b descends from a manuscript postdating the common ancestor of all, sharing its ancestor only with VWXZ, or (c) A1b descends from a manuscript postdating the common ancestor of all, sharing its ancestor only with Y.

We can limit these possibilities by looking at the following. In the passage about the Prophet's night journey A1a includes a line in {18.49} in which it is said that al-Burāq did not want to be mounted, until she heard from Gabriel that she was meant to carry the Prophet. This is indeed to be found in *sīra* literature, but none of the manuscripts of A2 have this. Another instance where A1b is more complete than the manuscripts of A2 is in {18.60}, where it has a fuller quotation of Q33:37. In the case of possibilities (b) and (c) these particular readings would have to be additions. Both variants, however, undoubtedly belong to an older manuscript of A2. This means that A1b is to be traced back to an ancestor predating the common ancestor of VWXZY.

The above discussion is visualized in the *stemma codicum* on the next page.




Below the basic tree appears once again, with some of the critical moments in the transmission history indicated by 'm':



Regarding the transmission of the *Legend*, the following observations can be made:

- It is clear that at m1 the *Legend* was in Syriac. The wording of the two Syriac recensions is very similar; if the *Legend* was rendered in Arabic at m1 this cannot be explained. A1a and A2, however, are very different in wording. Whereas in the case of A1a its Syriac ancestor is still detectable in its language, with A2 that is not the case. The stemma makes this point clear. Most scholars assume this sequence of events a priori, though it bears repeating since Abel and Graf were not convinced of the priority of the Syriac over the Arabic, nor are texts translated from Christian-Arabic into Syriac absolutely unheard of.[33] In other words between m3 and m5, and after m4, two independent Arabic translations were produced.
- The Latin recension reveals itself once more as being derived from the 'full' *Legend*. We started off by asserting this on the basis of a close reading that revealed the 'gluing together' of passages. Now we see it also on the basis of the comparison with the textual material of other recensions.
- The Latin recension shows itself once more as a translation from Syriac. If it were a translation from Arabic we would have to believe that there was another translation into Arabic some time between m2 and L, but neither of the extant Arabic recensions go back to the phase between m2 and L.
- The passages which WS, ES and A1a share (some of which are not to be found in L or A2, as for example about the Paraclete) must belong to the *Legend* at m1.
- The stemma does not reveal anything about the original confessional milieu in which the *Legend* was composed, because it is not known whether the transitions from one community to the next took place after m2 or m4 respectively.

[33] Abel, 'l'Apocalypse de Bahīra', p. 1; Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, p. 149. For an example of a saint's life that was translated from Arabic into Syriac, see: Nau, 'La Version Syriaque'.

## *Manuscripts*

### *Syriac Manuscripts Used for the Edition*

#### East Syrian

MS MINGANA SYRIAC 604 (*Manuscrit de base* of the edition of ES)
A collection of twenty-one texts, mostly liturgical, 225 fols in total, copied from various MSS in a neat East-Syrian hand by the deacon Joseph son of Thomas, at the request of Mingana, in 1933 in Alkosh (as indicated in the colophon on 225b). The MS starts off with the *Legend* (fol. 1–23), which has the following introductory note, after the title: 'this copy was made from an old copy which was found in the monastery of Mar Jacob the Recluse which is near Seert in the year 1884 of our Lord. It was written and brought by the monks of our master Hormizd to the Monastery of the Virgin in the year 1896 and during the depopulation and killing that took place among the Armenians that old manuscript was destroyed and this new one survived.' The words 'this new one' cannot refer to this very MS because the note is an integral part of the text here and could not have been added later. Most likely this note was added to the Vorlage of this MS.

See: Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, pp. 1156–1161

MS SACHAU 10
(Catalogue nr. 78) Undated MS containing only the *Legend*, on twenty-two fols, East-Syrian script, some stains but very well readable. Defective at beginning and end, and hence no colophon; the text starts at {3.07}, and it breaks off close to the end, at the beginning of the further notices against Islam. Sachau estimates that it is from the end of the 17th century, whereas Gottheil writes: 'May even be as old as the XIVth or XVth century'.

See: Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, vol. 1, pp. 293–294.
Gottheil, 'A Christian Bahira Legend', I, p. 199.

MS SHARFA 841 (olim 122)
A large collection of mostly West-Syrian texts, most of which are in Karshūnī or Arabic. The MS is made up of four independently paginated bindings, which make up a total of 267 fols. The fourth binding is the *Legend* in Syriac, in a clear East-Syrian hand, copied in the year 1889 by Zayā bar Qashīshā Zayā bar Paulus bar Zayā bar Marugā (?), at the request of ʿAbd al-Aḥad.

See: Sony, *Le catalogue des manuscrits*, pp. 332–333.

## West-Syrian

MS SACHAU 87 (catalogue nr. 247) (*Manuscrit de base* of the edition of WS)
Two texts in West-Syrian script, copied by two different hands, a total of seventy one fols of which four are blank and unnumbered. The *Legend* is to be found on fols 48–65 and is only sporadically vocalized. The MS begins with a Karshūnī version of the *Disputation of Theodore Abū Qurra with al-Ma'mūn*. The beginning of that text is found once again at the end of the MS after the *Legend*. The Karshūnī text was copied in the year 2156 of the Greeks (1845) by a certain ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, but the copy of the *Legend* is probably half a century older, according to Sachau.

See: Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, vol. 2, pp. 758–761.

MS MINGANA SYRIAC 71
A collection of thirty texts of various themes in an old binding of a total of 154 fols. Written by two different, clear, West-Syrian hands. Undated, but from around the year 1600, according to Mingana. *Legend* on fol. 27–37, acephalous (the text starts at {1.2}) and two lacunae in the middle of the text, sporadic vocalization. The last page of the *Legend* appears to have been written by another hand. Ownership mark of Maqdisī Yūsuf al-Qass Isḥāq.

See: Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, pp. 180–188.

MINGANA SYRIAC 107
Karshūnī with West-Syrian script, copied in 1925 from an unidentified MS from 1584 (1895 of the Greeks), by Matay bar Paulus in Mosul. A complete text on fifteen fols numbered as pages, with a few lines and words in Syriac, Arabic vowel signs.

See: Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, p. 263.

MS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX ARCHBISHOP OF THE AMERICAS
Modern copy (1971), complete, in a neat West-Syrian hand, made in Tur Abdin. It encompasses 119 pages of which the last ten are 'details of the life of the monk Sergius Baḥīrā'. This section forms a short summary of the *Legend*. The colophon tells us that the copy was written by Yoḥannan bar Malkā on the occasion of the visit of Mar Athanasius Ishoʿ, metropolitan of America, and Mar Dionysios Georgios, metropolitan of Aleppo, and Eustatius Qyriacus, metropolitan of Mesopotamia, to Mardin and Midyad and the monastery of Mar Gabriel. It is not said explicitly that the MS was copied from an MS in that monastery. It includes a makeshift critical apparatus, containing a few variant readings of unidentified MSS and some explanatory notes.

MS MAR GABRIEL s.n.
Modern copy, from the 1970s, from an unknown manuscript, by a student of the Mar Gabriel monastery, 28 pages. West-Syrian script, except for the seven introductory lines which are Estrangelo. Complete text, no colophon.

*Arabic Manuscripts Used for the Editions*

## Short Arabic Recension

MS BODL. AR. CHRIST. NICOLL 53 (BODL. OR. 199) (*Manuscrit de base* of the edition of A1)
An undated MS, without colophon, containing only the *Legend*, on fols 1–47, preceded by eight and followed by twenty blank pages. Although the text is undated, it is in all likelihood a copy of MS Par. Ar. 258.

See: Nicoll, *Catalogi Codicum Manuscriptorum*, vol. 2, p. 58.

MS PAR. AR. 258
A collection of twenty-five edifying and apologetic texts, the second of which is the *Legend* (fol. 48–64). Undated, but, according to Troupeau, 15th century. Reading marks of the years 1530, 1531 and 1673. Syrian script (according to Troupeau and Marcuzzo) but Egyptian origin (according to Marcuzzo). Folio numbering in Coptic numbers. All texts are in the same hand. The ink is very thick, which impedes reading at times. The text of the *Legend* is not identical to MS Par. Ar 70, contrary to what Troupeau writes. The *Legend* lacks one leaf, containing part of {16} and the beginning of {17}. The MS has been badly 'restored' in recent times. A strip of paper was cut off from every page, destroying approximately 1 centimeter of text per line. The microfilm, which was made apparently made at an earlier date, preserves a considerably larger portion of the texts than the MS does at present.

See: Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes*, pp. 217–222.
Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, p. 179.

## Long Arabic Recension

MS PAR. AR. 215 (*Manuscrit de base* of the edition of A2)
A collection of nine well-known Christian apologetic texts from different Eastern Christian communities, copied in the years 1590–1591, with a total of 260 fols. All in the same regular hand; Egyptian according to Troupeau. Entire *Legend* on fol. 154–176, completed on the 6th of Ṭūbā of the year 1306 of the Martyrs. Copyist anonymous.

See: Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes*, vol. 1, pp. 187–189, Troupeau, 'Note sur deux versions arabes', and Ebied, 'An unpublished short poem'.

MS PAR. AR. 70
A collection of four texts, undated and from an anonymous copyist, but, according to Troupeau, copied in the 15th century, in a Syrian hand. The *Legend* is defective at the beginning and has some lacunae. According to the present numbering it is to be found at fols 50–126, but in its original binding the *Legend* must have been the first text in the binding, followed by the *Wisdom of the Sybille*, the *Debate of Theodore Abū Qurra with al-Ma'mūn* and the *History of the Rehabites*, as can be deduced from the quire numbering and the recto and verso sides of the first and last folios of the different texts. Troupeau's reconstruction of the original order of the texts is incorrect.

See: Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes*, pp. 50–51.

MS PAR. AR. 71
A collection of the same four texts as MS Par. Ar. 70. Undated and from an anonymous copyist, but, according to Troupeau, 16th century; in a very clear Syrian hand. The remark above about the order of the texts in Par. Ar. 70 also counts for this MS. The *Legend* is also defective at the beginning and has two major lacunae.

See: Troupeau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits arabes*, p. 51.

MS GOTHA ORIENT. AR. 2875
Undated and of unknown provenance. This MS contains two apologetic texts, the *Debate of George the Monk with three Arab scholars of the year 1217 A.D.* and the *Legend*, which is on fols 47b–68b. Name of the scribe has been crossed out. Pertsch calls the hand 'neues, flüchtiges, doch ziemlich deutliches Naschî'. Ownership mark of Ḥannā Shukrī 'Ṭabīb Marūnī'. Gottheil claims that this MS is from the 13th century. He has presumably taken the purported date of the *Debate of George the Monk* as the date of the MS, but there is no ground for this.

See: Pertsch, *Arabische Handschriften*, vol. 4, pp. 547–548.
Gottheil, 'A Christian Bahira Legend' I, p. 201.

MS SBATH 1004
An 18th century MS, of unknown provenance, now in the possession of the Fondation Salem in Aleppo, a collection of seven texts that totals 330 fols, of which the *Legend* is to be found on fols 61–85. The text of the *Legend* is highly lacunose.

See: Sbath, *Bibliothèque*, vol. 2, p. 123.

*Manuscripts Consulted But Not Used In This Edition*

*Syriac Manuscripts*

West-Syrian

MS IN THE POSSESSION OF ʿABD AL-AḤAD SHABO, SWEDEN
This MS of twenty pages was copied in 1982 in the monastery of Mar Gabriel by Rabban Yūsuf Ghetin of Karboran from an unidentified MS of Dayr al-Zaʿfarān. This MS represents exactly the same text as the MS in the possession of the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of the Americas, including its footnotes and 'details of the life of the monk Sergius Baḥīrā'.

*Arabic Manuscripts*

Long Arabic Recension

MS VAT. AR. 176
A volume, bound together in the Vatican, containing three texts, starting with the *Legend* (fol. 2b–42a), followed by a short tract called *Taʿlīm al-Masīḥ waqawāʿidātihi* (fol. 43a–45a). These two texts are written by the same hand. They are extremely carelessly copied. Some passages occur twice and some are missing. Its script is very irregular and the text contains many errors. I have the impression that the MS was copied by a European, as the summary at the end of the text is written with what appears to be the same ink in fluent Italian. In the same binding another text follows, an Islamic text written in a Maghribi hand (fol. 46a–143a), which is a history of Morocco (462 A.D. to 1381 A.D.) The date of 1594 given in this text on fol. 63b cannot be taken as the date of the *Legend*, as Gottheil and Steinschneider do, because this is not the same hand. The history of Morocco can be found in another hand in MS Vat. Ar. 285.

See: Mai, *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio*, vol. 4, p. 319.

MS T-S. 14.11
Fragment from the Cairo Genizah, now at the Taylor Schechter Genizah Research Unit of Cambridge University Library. Two fols of a Judeo-Arabic version of the *Legend* in the recension of A2, datable to the second half of the classical Genizah period, between the 11th and 13th century.[34] Oriental paper, rather hasty Syrian cursive hand. The paper is fragile and worm-eaten and is therefore badly readable in several places. The text contains many misreadings, mostly due to the use of an unpunctuated Vorlage. The

[34] Szilágyi (p. 142*) dates it to the 11th or 12th century, Ben Outhwaite (whom I thank for sharing his expertise) dates it to the late 12th or early 13th century.

leaves originally belonged to the same binding as the manuscript fragment mentioned below.

See: Baker, Polliack and Ben-Shammai, *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections*, p. 50.
Shtober, 'The Monk Bahira, the Counselor of Muhammad', p. 72.
Szilágyi, 'Christian Books in Jewish Libraries', p. 121*, pp. 141*–142*.

MS BODL. HEB. D 57
Fragment from the Cairo Genizah, now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Eight fols of the same Judeo-Arabic manuscript as the one mentioned above, catalogued under 2745.25. Together these two Genizah fragments contain one third of the text of A2 ({16.19}–{17.13}), with one major lacuna from mid-{16.13} to mid-{16.27}.

See: Neubauer and Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, vol. 2, p. 170.
Szilágyi, 'Christian Books in Jewish Libraries', p. 121*, pp. 141*–142*.

*Inaccessible and Lost Manuscripts*

East-Syrian

MS YOHANNAN
A fragment of the East-Syrian recension, which was in the possession of Rev. A. Yohannan, lecturer in Oriental Languages at Columbia University. East-Syrian script from the 19th century, twelve fols only, very similar to Sachau 10. I do not know whether this fragment is still extant. Gottheil used it in his edition and indicates its variants as 'C'.

See: Gottheil, 'A Christian Bahira Legend', I, p. 200.

MS SEERT CHALDEAN BISHOPRIC 112
An undated MS, the twenty-two texts of which have been described by Scher, who believed it to be from the 15th century. The 21st text is the 'History of Sergius, by Yahb the Wanderer' in eleven fols. This MS is amongst the ones that survived the pillage by the Kurds at the end of the 19th century and were moved from their original location at the Monastery of Jacob the Recluse to the Chaldean Bishopric in Seert.[35] However, a large number of these have subsequently perished in the First World War and it is likely that this one was

[35] As indicated above, MS Mingana Syr. 604 also refers to these troubles and also claims to go back to a lost copy from the Monastery of Jacob the Recluse. Since Scher believes MS Seert Chaldean Bishopric to be 15th century, it could be the case that it was the Vorlage of the Vorlage of MS Mingana Syr. 604, and that the copyist of the Mingana MS wrongly assumed that it was lost.

amongst them, since it is not recorded amongst those that were transferred in time to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

See: Scher, *Catalogue des manuscrits de Séert*, pp. 81–82.
Desreumaux, *Répertoire des Bibliothèques*, pp. 230–231.
Troupeau, 'Note sur les manuscrits', p. 208.

MS BAGHDAD CHALDEAN MONASTERY MAR ANTONIUS 565
An MS described by Haddad and Isaac as being a collection of twenty-six texts, collected from various places, copied in the year 1886 by a number of monks from Alqosh. The *Legend* consists of twenty fols and is the third work in this collection.

See: Haddad and Isaac, *al-Makhṭūṭāt al-suryāniyya wa-l-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 256–259.

MS BAGHDAD CHALDEAN MONASTERY MAR ANTONIUS 577
A collection of three texts on thirty fols, the first of which is the story of Sergius 'Hater of the Cross'. Haddad and Isaac recognized the copyist as Elias Scher, even though his name is not recorded in the MS. Perhaps a copy of MS Seert Chaldean Bishopric 112, since the copyist notes that he had seen this writing in 1884 in an old book in the monastery of Jacob the Recluse and that he copied it there in 1896.

See: Haddad and Isaac, *al-Makhṭūṭāt al-suryāniyya wa-l-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 265.

MS BAGHDAD CHALDEAN MONASTERY MAR ANTONIUS 612
(olim MS Notre-Dame des Semences 206)
An MS containing the first part of the story of Ahikar the Philosopher (thirty five fols) and the *Legend* (twenty-nine fols). It does not contain a date or the name of the copyist, but according to Vosté it was done by the same hand as the MS below.

See: Haddad and Isaac, *al-Makhṭūṭāt al-suryāniyya wa-l-ʿarabiyya*, vol. 1, p. 282.
Vosté, *Catalogue du Couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences*, p. 77.

MS NOTRE-DAME DES SEMENCES 207
This work contained three texts. The first, entitled the *Book of the Remedies*, is dated 4-6-1920 and copied by the monk Paul; it was bound together with an MS containing the same two texts as the MS Baghdad Chaldean Monastery Mar Antonius 612 above, written by the same monk according to Vosté, i.e. Thomas son of Ḥanna ʿAbdallāh of Karmelesh, for father Michael of Malaberon (?). That latter were completed on 14-11-1917. The MS is probably lost. It is not to be found in the catalogue of Haddad and Isaac, and Macomber already noted in 1966 that this MS was not in the monastery of Notre-Dame des Semences anymore, nor in the Monastery of St George to which much of the Notre-Dame des Semences collection had been moved at the time.

See: Vosté, *Catalogue du Couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences*, p. 77.
Macomber, 'New finds of Syriac Manuscripts', p. 476.

MS NOTRE-DAME DES SEMENCES 144
A manuscript described by Scher as containing ten texts, of which the fourth is 'Histoire de Sarguis'. No date, but a 19th century hand. The MS is not mentioned by Vosté in his *Catalogue du Couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences*, and is probably lost.

See: Scher, 'Notice sur les manuscrits de Notre-Dame-des-Semences', p. 76

MS MARDIN CHALDEAN BISHOPRIC 82
A manuscript described by Scher and numbered as 82. It is a collection of seven texts, the fifth of which is the 'Histoire de Sarguis, ennemi des Croix, écrite par Yahb le Vagabond', written by Elia Millos in 1890.

See: Scher, 'Notice sur les manuscrits de Mardin', p. 87.

## West-Syrian

MS IN THE SYRIAN-ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE IN HASSAKE
This manuscript was copied in 1971 by a certain Simeon for the Metropolitan Eustatius Quriacus. On the basis of the notes which Prof. Lucas van Rompay has made of the beginning and the end of the manuscript it can be safely assumed that this MS also represents the same modern version of the *Legend* as the MS in the possession of the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of the Americas.

## Short Arabic Recension

MS DAYR AL-SHĪR 809
A 19th century collection of texts, containing the *Legend* in Arabic on fols 44–72. The excerpts published by Michel Abras show that it is a witness to the A1 recension.

See: Abras, 'Un riche recueil melkite', pp. 59–60, p. 68.

## Long Arabic Recension

MS SHARFA 9/6
This is an undated manuscript containing a text of A2, as one can see from its *incipit*: *qāla Marhab al-rāhib anā Marhab al-khāṭī aqamtu*. Judging from the description of Armalet, this MS contains the same texts as MS Gotha 2875, that is: the *Debate of George the Monk with three Arab scholars* and the *Legend*, but it is in Karshūnī.

See: Armalet, *Catalogue des Manuscrits*, p. 188.

## Arabic Manuscripts—Recension Undetermined

A MANUSCRIPT IN THE POSSESSION OF ḤABĪB ZAYYĀT
This manuscript from Yabrūd is mentioned by Graf, who knew it to be in the possession of Ḥabīb Zayyāt. Nasrallah has declared it lost.

See: Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2, p. 149.
Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement*, vol. 2, p. 137.

A MANUSCRIPT IN THE POSSESSION OF ʿABD ALLĀH AL-ṢĀʾIGH,
a Catholic Armenian from Aleppo. Referred to as *Ruʾyā Baḥīrā l-rāhib wa-mubāḥathatuhu maʿa Muḥammad nabī l-Islām* in:

See: Sbath, *al-Fihris*, part 1, p. 36, nr. 257.[36]

A MANUSCRIPT IN THE POSSESSION OF ʿABD AL-MASĪḤ ṢALĪB AL-BARAMŪSĪ L-MASʿŪDĪ,
a Coptic priest from Cairo. Referred to as *Sīrat al-rāhib Baḥīrā* in:

See: Sbath, *al-Fihris*, part 3, p. 188, nr. 2399.[37]

[36] This catalogue is an inventory of manuscripts in private collections, known to Paul Sbath, in Aleppo and some other cities around the Middle East. Most of these have, however, never been seen by other scholars.

[37] See previous note.

*Conspectus Siglorum*

| | |
|---|---|
| B | MS SACHAU 87 |
| C | MS MAR GABRIEL s.n. |
| D | MS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX ARCHBISHOP OF THE AMERICAS |
| E | MS MINGANA SYRIAC 71 |
| F | MS MINGANA SYRIAC 107 |
| J | MS T-S. 14.11 & MS BODL. HEB. D 57 |
| Lb | MS BOURGES LATIN 367 (306) |
| Lp | MS BN LATIN 2599 |
| M | MS VAT. AR. 176 |
| P | MS YOHANNAN |
| Q | MS MINGANA SYRIAC 604 |
| R | MS SHARFA 841 |
| S | MS SACHAU 10 |
| T | MS BODL. AR. CHRIST. NICOLL 53 |
| U | MS PAR. AR. 258 |
| V | MS PAR. AR. 70 |
| W | MS PAR. AR. 71 |
| X | MS SBATH 1004 |
| Y | MS GOTHA ORIENT. AR. 2875 |
| Z | MS PAR. AR. 215 |

## *Methodological Considerations*

### *Method of the Edition*

The method of the edition was to choose the best manuscript of each recension and to present it including all of its errors, together with a critical apparatus that includes virtually all variant readings of the other selected manuscripts within a recension, i.e. the method proposed by Draguet for the edition of Syriac texts.[38] The only exception is a minor change in the spelling of a number of words in the short Arabic recension, in which the diacritical point of the *ẓāʾ* is frequently omitted. This inconsistent omission only occurs in T, not in its Vorlage U, and is not reflective of Middle-Arabic pronunciation. For these reasons this has been corrected.

The choice of the *manuscrits de base* of each of the recensions did not depend on the age of the manuscripts available (none of the manuscripts are close in date to the time the recensions were made and textually not one of the manuscripts has clear preference over the other ones, with the exception of T),[39] but rather on the following criteria: first, their completeness, second, the care with which they were each copied, and third, their relative textual proximity to the other manuscripts of the same recension. The method is not aimed at the reconstruction of the archetype of the recensions, but rather strives to maintain the autonomy of the individual texts. Fundamental to this approach is the choice to keep the amount of suggestions for improved readings to a minimum. These have only been made when the text is incomprehensible or bizarre, or when names are nonsensical in one text while they are clear in other recensions or manuscripts. In such a case there will be a variant reading in the footnote preceded by 'lege'. There are different types of suggestions for improved readings to be found in the editions:

– those which are to be found in other manuscripts of the same recension;

[38] Draguet, 'Une méthode d'édition des textes syriaques'.

[39] Manuscript E, Y and J contain readings that are closer to their respective original recensions, but each also have unsurpassable drawbacks: E and J are incomplete and all three have many particular and erroneous readings which are neither close to the respective original recensions nor to the other manuscripts. As for the choice of T over U, this is motivated by the fact that considerable sections of U have disappeared during restauration of the MS and the fact that its thick ink impedes reading at times.

– those which are to be found in other recensions;
– those which are not to be found in any other text of the *Legend*. These are minimal changes to make a readable text, in case none of the manuscripts present a sensible alternative.

In the third case noted above the suggestion will be provided with a question mark, whereas in the other two cases this will only occur when even the improved reading is somewhat uncertain. No suggestions will be made when other manuscripts have a *plausibly* more correct reading, or a *grammatically* more correct reading, or if the genealogy of manuscripts reveals that a divergent reading is closer to the archetype of the recension. When all other manuscripts share a divergent reading, but the *manuscrit de base* represents a comprehensible text, no divergent reading will be suggested.

The choice of the method and the amount of manuscripts yield a high number of variant readings. Making a full record of the variant readings is justifiable in view of the presence of detailed apologetic arguments, minute exegetical issues, as well as obscure apocalyptic allusions. Furthermore, they will allow readers to view the extent to which especially the Arabic texts have undergone change due to the transmission without diacritical punctuation. Some restrictions in the documentation of variants have nevertheless been applied, for fear that the apparatus become too unwieldy. The following variants have not been included:

– in Syriac: the writing of two words as one (i.e. without space) and vice versa;
– in Syriac: variation in the use of syāmē in case of numerals;
– in Arabic: variant punctuation of Arabic letters when it does not affect the meaning, including the variant spelling of the *tā' marbūṭa* with or without dots.
– variations in spelling of the names Ishmael and Muḥammad

The only text of which only a minor number of variants is included is J, as has been explained above.[40]

The texts of the edition have not been vocalized. Most manuscripts lack vowels or have only sporadic and inconsistent vocalization. In the Syriac texts diacritical points are inserted only to distinguish the basic verb forms. These generally follow the examples of the manuscript, but when the manuscript is inconsistent this has not been noted.

[40] See p. 233.

The punctuation that separates the phrases diverges from the punctuation in the manuscripts. The division into paragraphs is also an intervention into the text on my part.

*Critical Apparatus*

When a variant reading applies to multiple words of the main text the sign ⌝ has been inserted before the first word to which the variant reading applies. This sign recurs in the apparatus. If such a variant reading coincides with another variant reading of multiple words, the one which begins first will be indicated by *. In case even more variants of multiple words occur in the same passage more asterisks will be used accordingly.

In the apparatus the variant readings that apply to only one word in the main text will appear first. After that the variant readings applying to multiple words are given, indicated by the signs described above. If several manuscripts contain different variant readings applying to the sequence of multiple words these will be given without a repetition of that sign.

If a variant reading concerns only the initial or final letter of a word, only the letter in question has been given in the apparatus, preceded by i (= 'initial letter') or f (= 'final letter').

When a manuscript has lost a number of leaves or omits a long passage, this is indicated in two separate footnotes, one at the beginning of the lacuna and one at the end.

The following is a survey of signs and abbreviations used in the apparatus:

| | |
|---|---|
| ~ | reverse word order (if referring to more than two words the order will be indicated with numbers in brackets) |
| + | addition |
| < | omission |
| ditt | dittography |
| f | last letter |
| hom | homoioteleuton or homoearchon |
| i | first letter |
| illeg | illegible |
| im | written in margin |
| lege | suggestion for improved reading |

*Translation Method*

The goal of the translation has been to remain as close as possible to the original. When the edition contains suggested readings the translation will follow those, but the emendation will remain recognizable because of the use of square brackets. Only in the first case noted above, when the reading is found in other manuscripts of the recension, will they be included tacitly in the translation.

When more than a few words are used from another recension to make a more readable text, these will be added in square brackets, but without adding them to the text edition. These instances will be signaled by means of a footnote to the translated text.

When one or more words are added to improve the English text, without these words being based on emendations in the text or on passages in other texts, they will appear among small vertical lines (| |).

Verses from the Qur'an, which often appear in a garbled form in the Arabic texts, have been translated according to their proper source, not as they are found in the manuscripts. It should be noted that the text edition includes no emendations of this kind.

*Numbering of Passages*

In order to facilitate comparison of the texts across the different recensions, many lines and passages have been supplied with a number. It is worth noting that the numbering is merely a practical tool for comparison, and *not* the result of final assessment of the variant readings across the recensions. The insertion of numbers was done prior to the final comparison for the genealogical investigation, and it has not been adapted afterwards. Equal numbers in different recensions therefore often indicate only the comparative location in the text and/or thematic resemblance. In cases where the agreement of passages across two or more recensions was already clear at the time of numbering, despite their occurrence in different parts of the text, the passages have received the same numbers, but if not, they may have different numbers.

CHAPTER NINE

# THE EAST-SYRIAN RECENSION

{0} ܗܘ ܕܐ[1] ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ ܡܫܐ ܕܐ[2] ܒܗ ܕܐ ܡܫܐ ܕܐ[3] ܗܘ ܕܐ[4] ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ[5] ܡܫܐ ܕܐ[6] ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ[7] .

ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ ܡܫܐ ܕܐ ܗܘ ܕܐ ܡܫܐ ܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ . ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ[8] ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܕܐ ܡܫܐ ܕܐ

{0} With the power of our Lord Jesus Christ we begin to write the account of Sergius, who is called the hater of the cross, which was done by Mar Yahb Alāhā the Wanderer.[1]

Note: this copy was made from an old copy, which was present in the monastery of Mar Jacob the Recluse, which is near Seert.[2] In the year 1884 of our Lord it was copied and it was brought by the monks of Rabban Hormizd to the Monastery of the Virgin in the year 1896. During the depopulation and killing that happened to the Armenians that old copy perished and only this one remained.[3]

{1} Now I, Mar Yahb the Wanderer, while I wandered in many places, {1.2} I also reached the inner desert {1.3} and I went up to Thebes {1.4} and I also went to the mountain of Yathrib.[4] I entered the desert of the Sons of Ishmael and I saw the whole of the people of the Sons of

---

[1] In the rest of the text the narrator is simply called Mar Yahb. WS has Ishoʿyahb. Mar Yahb is a name less frequently used but nevertheless attested; see for example: Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, pp. 458–459 (ttr), a manuscript in the Mingana collection entitled 'The letter of Jacob of Serug to Mar Yāheb the Solitary'; *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, p. 613, and Ishoʿdenaḥ of Basra's reference to an ascetic with this name: Chabot, *Le Livre de la Chasteté*, p. 25 (t), p. 23 (tr). The redactor of this recension may have overlooked the fact that 'Mar' is not a title here but part of the monk's name, ('The Lord has given'). This could explain the addition of Alāhā in this heading.

[2] See Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, p. 471 (ttr) and Chabot, *Le Livre de la Chasteté*, p. 14 (ttr), for the story of its foundation by Jacob, follower of Abraham of Kashkar, *and* a recluse.

[3] This note, being an integral part of the written text of this manuscript, does not make sense: it is impossible that 'this one' refers to MS Mingana 604, because the 'old copy' could not have perished before it acted as a Vorlage for MS Mingana 604. We must therefore assume that this remark had been noted down on an older manuscript and was subsequently included into the text of MS Mingana 604. The 'Monastery of the Virgin' is the Monastery of Our Lady of the Harvest, close to Alqosh, which was built in the mid-nineteenth century, and to which indeed many of the surviving manuscripts of the nearby monastery of Rabban Hormizd were brought. See for both monasteries: Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, vol. 2, pp. 533–549.

[4] Yathrib is the original name of the city of Medina and its surroundings. It is not a mountain; cf. WS: 'the desert of Yathrib'.

ܒܪܟܬ ܫܒܚܬ ܡܪܝܬ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ {1.5} ܐܟܝ ܬܗܘ ܫܡܗ ܡܒܪܟ ܒܫܡ
2a ܬܗ {2.2} . ܥܠܡܝܢ ܩܕܝܫܝܢ ܟܠܗ | ܡ ܒܫܒܥܝܢ {2} . ܡܝܬܝ ܡܝܬ
ܝܗܒ ܠܟ ܥܠܡܝܢܟ ܠܟ ܥܡ ܬܒܪܟ ܘܡ ܬ . ܫܒܚܐ ܡܝܬ[1] ܝܗ
. [3]ܥܠܡܝ[2] ܒܚܝܐ ܬܒܪܟ ܫܒܝܚ

ܫܒܚ ܒܪܟ {2.4} . ܩܒܝܠ ܘܡ ܫܒܩ ܒܪ ܫܒܚ ,ܫܒܚ ܬ {2.3}
. ܠ ܒܪܟ ܒܪܝܟ ܫܒܚ ܫܒܚ ܬ ܘܡ {2.5} . ܫܒܚ ܒܪܟ
. ܫܒ ܠ ܒܪ ܫ ܫ ܫܒܚ . ܒܪ ܫܒ[4] ܠ ܒܪ
ܬ ܫ {2.6} . ܒܪ ܫܒ ܒ[6]ܫ ܒ ܫ[5] . ܠ ܫ ܫ
ܒ[7]ܘ . ܫܒ ܫ ܒ ܫ ,ܒ ܘ . ܠ {2.7} . ܫ ܫ ,ܒ ܘ
ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ
ܫ . [8]ܫ ܫ ܫ {3} . ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ
ܘ ܫ[9] {3.2} . ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ
2b ܫ {3.3} . ܫ ܫ | ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ ܫ[10]

[1]lege + ܡ R [2]lege? + ܠ (cf. WS) [3]lege? + ܘܡ (cf. WS) [4]< R [5]ܒܪ ܫܒ R [6]ܫ ܒ ܫ R [7]i + ܘ R [8]ܫ ܫ R [9]ܫ R [10]ܫ ܠ R

Hagar, {1.5} who are barbarian and primitive like wild desert asses.[5] {2} And I found | Sergius there with them. {2.2} They call him 2a
'Baḥīrā'[6] and 'the chosen one',[7] because he prophesied to them about their kingdom and about the twenty-four kings that would rule their future generations.

{2.3} Sergius, now, was of old age. {2.4} I went to him and greeted him. {2.5} He sighed and wept bitterly and said to me: 'I have been here for forty years and I have not seen a single Christian here, except you. Now I know that the end of my life is at hand.' {2.6} Then I began to converse with him and to ask him about how he had come there. He then said to me: 'O sir, I was for a long time in the monastery of the Ḥīreans.[8] {2.7} Then the idea of going to Jerusalem occurred to me, so as to travel around the holy sites. And this I did indeed. {3} Next I went up to Mount Sinai, where Moses received a divine revelation. {3.2} And I heard people say that anyone who passes the night on top of the mountain is worthy | of a divine revelation. {3.3} 'And he who is 2b

[5] Cf. Gen 16:11–12.

[6] One could also translate *Baḥīrā* as 'eminent', on the grounds that it is an epithet which in Muslim writings appears as a proper name. For the origin of the name, see above: pp. 56–59.

[7] Just like the epithet Baḥīrā, *gabyā*, 'the chosen one', is a honorific designation for pious men, given for example to Mar Gabriel of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn in a document describing the protection of 'Umar to his monastery: Nau, 'Un colloque du patriarche Jean', p. 275. WS has 'prophet' here, which is graphically similar (ܢܒܝܐ vs. ܚܒܝܐ).

[8] Ḥīreans (*Ḥīrtāyē*) are the inhabitants of al-Ḥīra, capital of the Lakhmid Kingdom and an important centre of Arabic Christianity in Southern Iraq close to the later Kūfa. The monk's alleged sojourn among these people is the only element in the Legend which could serve as an explanation of how the Syriac-speaking monk could communicate with the Arabic-speaking Muḥammad. In the other recensions it is missing, although WS alludes to the monk's connections with that region in its introduction (see below WS, p. 315). The name is not given in the *Thesaurus Syriacus*, but is used several times in Michael the Syrian's Chronicle (for example Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. 4, pp. 416–417. Although this is less likely, it could also mean 'the people of the encampment(s)', 'encampment' also being the origin of the name al-Ḥīra, since in relation to monastic life the term *ḥīrtā* has been used for a lavra type of community (as Thomas of Marga uses it in reference to Mount Izla; see Budge, *Thomas of Marga. The book of governors*, vol. 1, p. 60 (t), Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus Syrischen Akten*, pp. 171–172 (t).

ܐܝܬܝܗ ܟܬܒ ܐ ,ܡܐܡܪ ܐܡ ܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܐܬܐ ܐ ,ܡܐܡܪ
ܠܗ .[1]

ܐ ܡܝܠܐ ܗܕ . ܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ]3[ܠܗ ܡܝܕܥ ܡܝܕܥ ܥܠ ]2[ܐ {3.4}
. ܒܟܠ ܐܡ ]6[ܥܠ ]5[ܒܢ ]4[ܠ ܐ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܠ ܐܝܟ ]1[ܐ ܐ
ܒܡ {3.7} . ܡܝܠ ܒܝ ܒܠ ܒܡ ܒܡ ]8[ ܐ ܒܟ ܡܢ ]9[ {3.6}
ܒܡ . ]7[ ܐ ܡ ܐ ܡ ܐ ]10[ . ]11[ ]12[ ]13[ ]14[ ]15[ ]16[ ]17[
ܒܡ {3.11} . ]18[ ]19[ ]20[ ]21[ ]22[ ]23[ ]24[ ]25[ ]26[
ܒܡ {3.12} . ]27[ ]28[ ]29[ ]30[ ]31[ ]32[ ]33[ ]34[ ]35[
3a ]36[ ]37[ . ]38[ ]39[ | ]40[ . ]41[ ]42[ ]43[ ]44[ ]45[
]46[ ]47[ ]48[ ]49[ ]50[ ]51[ ]52[ ]53[ ]54[ ]55[ ]56[
. ]57[ ]58[ ]59[ ]60[ ]61[ ]62[ ]63[ ]64[ ]65[ ]66[
ܒܡ {3.13} . ]67[ ]68[ ]69[ ]70[ ]71[ ]72[ ]73[ ]74[ ]75[
. ]76[ ]77[ ]78[ ]79[ ]80[ ]81[ ]82[ ]83[ ]84[ ]85[
ܒܡ {3.14} ]86[ ]87[ ]88[ ]89[ ]90[ ]91[ ]92[ ]93[ ]94[
]95[ . ]96[ ]97[ ]98[ ]99[ ]100[ ]101[ ]102[ ]103[ ]104[
. ]105[ ]106[ ]107[ ]108[ ]109[ ]110[ ]111[ ]112[ ]113[
]114[ ]115[ ]116[ ]117[ ]118[ ]119[ ]120[ ]121[ ]122[
]123[ ]124[ ]125[ ]126[ ]127[ ]128[ ]129[ ]130[ ]131[

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[1] blank line follows [2] crossed out and changed into ܗ R [3] ܠ changed into ܕ R
[4] ܥ ܒ im R [5] i + ܠ R [6] < R [7] first word of S [8] f ܐ R [9] i + ܐ S [10] lege + ܒܟܠ ܐ
ܟܬܒ ܐ ܟܬܒ ܐ ܟܬܒ R (hom in P), + ܟܬܒ ܐ ܟܬܒ ܒܟܠ ܐ S [11] ܟܬܒ S
[12] < S [13] < S [14] ܟܬܒ S [15] i + ܐ RS [16] i < S [17] < S [18] i + ܠ S [19] ܟܬܒ S [20] ~ S
[21] f + ܐ S [22] i < RS [23] ܟܬܒ S [24] i + ܠ S [25] ܒܡ S

from the East is sent to the West and he who is from the West is sent to the East.'[9]

{3.4} And next they finished the psalms in the church inside the monastery, and when they left the refectory, guards went around that monastery and nobody was permitted to stay there overnight.[10] {3.6} Then I got up secretly and climbed to the top of the mountain. {3.7} And there I saw a great, unspeakable light and innumerable myriads of angels. And I saw a great cross that gave light to the whole creation, and in brilliance it surpassed the sun. {3.8} I was very frightened and great fear befell me. {3.9} Then one of the angels approached me and said to me: 'Take heart and do not fear!' {3.11} And I saw the four winds of the sky stirring up each other.[11]

{3.12} And I saw a white beast coming on the wind of the South and it ate the East and the West and the South and the North and the sea and it settled in the desert. And | on its head were twelve horns. And 3a
I said to the angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Ishmaelites'.[12]

{3.13} Then I saw a black beast on the wind of the North and it ate the East and the West and the South and the North and the sea and it settled in the land of Babel. And on its head were seven horns. And I said to the angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Hāshim son of Muḥammad'.

{3.14} And then I saw a bull coming in great calm and humility, on the wind of the South. And on its head were five horns. And it ate the four quarters of the world and it settled in Assur. And I said to

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[9] This mysterious saying, being the lead-up to Baḥīrā's vision, alludes to the future suffering in the world prior to the End of Times, when fleeing in either direction is of no avail. Similar sayings, clearly referring to total crisis, can be found in the Arabic Sybilline prophecies (Schleifer, *Die Erzählung der Sybille*, pp. 37,39 (t), pp. 65–66 (tr); Ebied and Young, 'An unrecorded Arabic Version', p. 300 (t), p. 301 (tr)), in the Book of the Rolls (Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter', p. 338 (t), p. 271 (tr)) and in the Armenian 'Seventh Vision of Daniel' (Kalemkiar, 'Die siebente Vision Daniels', p. 134 (t), p. 238 (tr)).

[10] This prohibition is a well-known tradition about Mount Sinai; already in the account of Egeria's pilgrimage (fourth or fifth century) it is mentioned that no monk would ever stay overnight on top of the Mountain; Procopius speaks of 'constant crashes and thunder and other terrifying manifestations of divine power' preventing people from staying there; Maraval, *Égérie. Journal de voyage*, pp. 132–133 (ttr); Dewing, *Procopius. Buildings*, vol. 6, pp. 356–357 (ttr). See also Eckenstein, *A History of Sinai*, p. 128.

[11] Cf. Dan 7:2.

[12] For historical background to the apocalyptic animals featuring in {3.12}–{3.18}, see above: Ch. 3.

ܐܡ[1] ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܡܕܡ ܘܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܡܕܡ ܐܦ[2] ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܡܕܡ ܐܠܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܠܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܡܫܬܐܠ ܠܡܠܟܐ ܐܘ

the angel: 'What is this bull, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of Mahdī, son of Fāṭima, and as the bull is calm and humble and peaceful, likewise his kingdom will be more humble and peaceful than all the kingdoms. All the tribes of the Sons of Ishmael await him and with him | the kingdom of the Arabs will end.' 3b

{3.15} And I saw a panther dressed in a garment of blood, on the wind of the West. And I said to the angel: 'And this, what is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Sufyān. And he will raise all the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael with the edge of the sword, and he will persecute them to the mountain of Yathrib.'

{3.16} And then I saw a yearling goat coming. And I said to the angel: 'Who is he, my lord?' He said to me: 'This is the seed of Joktan, who are the people from Qaṭar'.[13]

{3.17} And then I saw a lion coming with great and mighty force. It trampled and struck all, and it devoured all. And there was no one that could withstand him. And I said to the angel: 'Who is he, my lord?'. He said to me: 'The Mightiest Mahdī, son of ʿĀ'isha, is his name. And in his days there will be great suffering and persecution, the like of which is not in the world.'

{3.18} And then I saw a man dressed in a green garment. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'. He said to me: 'This is the last kingdom | of the Sons of Hagar, with which will be their end and their 4a disappearance from the earth'.

{3.19} And then I saw a chariot, ornamented with all kinds of beautiful things. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'. He said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Romans, who will rule at the end of all the kingdoms of the world'.[14]

{3.20} Then I saw a great dragon, as it came creeping and devouring mercilessly. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this dragon, my lord?' He said to me: 'He is the Son of Perdition, who is bound to come at the end of the world'.[15]

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[13] Qaṭar, to a Syriac author, does not refer to the peninsula but to the larger area called Bēt Qaṭrāyē, one of the East-Syrian dioceses, which encompassed the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula down to Oman. See: Fiey, 'Les diocèses syriens orientaux', pp. 209–219; Healey, 'The Christians of Qatar'.

[14] The eschatological victory of King of the Romans, i.e. the Byzantine Emperor, is a standard item in Eastern Christian apocalyptic texts and cannot be presented as proof of a Melkite origin of the *Legend*, as Nasrallah does (Nasrallah, *Histoire du Mouvement*, vol. 2, pp. 136–137, id., 'Dialogue Islamo-chrétien', p. 128).

[15] Cf. 2 Thess 2:3.

{3.21} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܒܝܬ ܠܐ ܬܫܬܘܩ ܐܠܐ ܠܡܪܝܡ ܒܪ ܝܘܣܦ

{3.21} And then I saw Satan who fell like a flash of lightning from the sky, and he was filled with envy, contention and hatred toward the whole of the race of Adam.[16]

{3.22} And then I saw a man coming on the wind of the East, who was dressed in glory, honor and magnificence. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'. He said to me: 'This is the Prophet Elijah, son of strangers, who will come at the end of the world.[17] And he is a messenger before Christ.'[18]

{3.23} And then I saw the crown of the king and | the venerable 4b
cross, being raised up and ascending to heaven.

{3.24} And then I saw three angels dressed in fire and arrayed in flames. And I said to the angel: 'Who are they, my lord?' And he answered, saying to me: 'Gabriel and Michael and ʿAzrael.'[19] {3.25} And I went forward a little. And one of them said to me: 'Follow me!' And I followed him in fear and trembling. {3.26} And I ascended behind him to heaven. {3.27} And there I saw a great unspeakable light, {3.28} and the nine orders of angels in nine ranks,[20] {3.29} and the Spirit of God descending from heaven, {3.30} and the Ancient of Days,[21] highly extolled in the clouds, who is Christ, Saviour of the world, {3.31} and the world being dissolved and passing away, and heaven, being rolled up like a scroll[22] and passing away, {3.32} and everything passing away and vanishing, {3.33} and the earth being dissolved, passing away and becoming desolate and waste.[23] And everything became like nothing.

{3.36} And there I saw Adam, father of all of us, and all the righteous and virtuous | fathers, and Noah and his sons, and also Melchize- 5a
dek and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Job and Enoch and Elijah and Moses and Aaron, and the host of the prophets and the company of the apostles and the twelve thrones of the apost-

16 Luke 10:18.
17 Cf. 1 Kings 17:1.
18 Cf. Matt 17:1, Mal 4:5.
19 ʿAzrael is not mentioned in the Bible, but his name is found in Syriac charms as a guardian angel, where he features also in unison with Michael and Gabriel; Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels*, pp. 64–65. See also: WS, p. 327, n. 25.
20 Cf. WS, p. 310, n. 25.
21 Cf. Dan. 7:9, 7:13, 7:22.
22 Cf. Isa. 34:4.
23 Cf. Gen 1:2.

. ܡܫܬܒܚܢ ܡܫܟܚ ܡܠܡܠ ܡܢ[1] ܡܢ ܡܠܡܠ[1] {3.37} ܡܠܠܡ ܐܟ
. ܡܫܘܝܡ[2] ܡܟܝܢ ܫܝܟ ܡܡܝܢ ܡܫܝܟ ܡܒ ܕ ܡܟ ܡܟܡܟܠ
. ܡܟܠ ܡܠܟ ܡܢ ܟܡܡ[3] ܒܝܟ ܡܟ ܡܝܡ ܒܠܡ ܟܡܟ ܟܡ
ܡ ܡܟܫܒܡ ܡܡܡܡ ܒܡܟ ܐܡ . ܡܟܟ ܠ ܐܒ ܫܠܟ {3.38}
ܡ ܡܠܠܟ . ܡܫ ܡ ܡܝܠ ܒܡܡ {3.39} . ܡܡ ,ܡܠܒܡ
ܠܡܡܫ ܡܡܝܡ ܟܡ ܕ[4] ܡܡ ܡ ܡܫܫ ܒܠܟ ܡܡܫ ܡܒ
ܡ ܒܝܒ ܒܫ[5] ܟܡ ܫܡ . ܡܡܒܒ ܒܠ ܡ
[9]ܡܠ ܠܡ {3.40} . ܐܡ [8]ܡܫ [7]ܠ ܡܠ[6] ܡ ܐܒ ܐܒ
ܡ ,ܐܟ ܠ ܡܡ ܒ

5b ܐܒ . ܡܫ ܡܠ ܡ ܐ ܡ ܠ ܐܟ ܠ {4} ܐܒ
ܡ ܠ . ܡܒܒ ܡ ,ܡܠ ܐ ܡ . ܡܒ ܐ ,ܡ ܡ
ܐ ܡ ܒ[12]ܡ . ܡ ܠ ܡ ܠ ܡ ܠ ܡ ܡ ܡ ܡ
ܡ ܡ[13]ܡ ܡ ܡ {4.3}. ܡ ܡ ܡ ܠ
. ܡ ,ܡ ܡ[15]ܡ[14]ܡ ,ܡ ܡ ܡ
. ܡ ܐ ܡ ܡ . ܡ[17]ܡ[16] {4.4}
ܡ ,ܡ[19]ܡ ܡ ,ܡ[18]ܡ ,ܡ ܡ
ܡ ܡ ܡ . ܡ ܡ[20]ܡ ܡ ܡ {4.5} . ܡ ܠ ܐ ܡ ܡ ܠ ܡ
ܡ ܠ ܡ ܡ . ܡ ܡ[21]ܡ ܡ ܡ ܡ ܡ
ܡ ܠ ܐ ܡ . ܡ ܡ[23]ܡ[22]ܡ {4.6}

[1] ~ S [2] i < S [3] ~ S [4] f < RS [5] ~ S [6] ~ S [7] ~ S [8] i < S [9] < S [10] f ~ S [11] < S [12] i + ~ R [13] f ~ R, ~ S [14] ~ S [15] lege? f ~ (cf. WS) [16] + ~ S [17] ~ R [18] f ~ S [19] ~ S [20] syāmē < S [21] i < S [22] i < S [23] i + ~ S

les, and King David chanting hallelujah, {3.37} and the tree of life, and the tree of good and evil, and the great spring that goes out in the middle of paradise and spreads into four rivers, Gihon and Pishon and the Tigris and the great river Euphrates, which give life to the whole world.[24]

{3.38} Then the angel said to me: 'Look down and observe the bottomless pit, for it is Gehenna'. {3.39} And I saw the unquenchable fire and the worm that does not die,[25] and great eternal torment and innumerable people, screaming, gnashing their teeth, weeping and lamenting endlessly and sighing. And I sighed and wept and said: 'What gain is there to a man if he acquires the whole world and loses his soul'.[26] {3.40} All this I saw with my soul and not with my body.

{4} Then | the angel said to me: 'Go to Maurice, King of the Greeks, 5b
and break your staff before him and say to him: "In like manner will your kingdom be broken, and you will not let your sons inherit it, as you expect".' {4.2} And I went and did as the angel had told me. He did not get angry with me and he did not answer me anything evil, but said to me: 'the will of our Lord shall be'. {4.3} And when one of the officers heard that I was sent by God, he set up a revolt against him and killed [him], and it was fulfilled.[27]

{4.4} Then I left for the land of the Persians and went to Chosroes the King, and I broke the half of my staff before him and said to him: 'In like manner will your kingdom be broken by the wild asses that are in the desert, who are the Sons of Hagar'.[28] He did not get angry with me either, nor did he say anything evil. {4.5} But he asked me: 'How did you go to Maurice, King of the Greeks, and what did you say to him and what did he reply to you? {4.6} And what is Mount Sinai

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[24] Cf. Gen 2:10–14.

[25] * Mark 9:48.

[26] * Matt. 16:26, Mark 8:36, Luke 9:25.

[27] The Byzantine Emperor Maurice was killed by Phocas in November 602. The monk's vision about his imminent murder echoes the many Byzantine prophecies surrounding his death; this historical episode is included here not only to establish the time period in which the monk was allegedly active, but also to secure his credentials as a visionary and to demonstrate that in the Christian world the predestined Muslim attacks on the Byzantine and Persian Empires were known prior to the Prophet's supposed prophecy about them which he made known to the Emperors by means of letters.

[28] Cf. Gen 16:12.

6a ܟܠܗ ܠܒܫ[4] ܥܝܕܢܐ[3] ܥܝܪ[2] ܠܓ[1] ܒܝܫ ܫܡܥ ܠ ܒܝܕܥ . ܟܬܒ | ܒܝܫ
ܠ ܝܟܠ ܠܗ ܠܡܕ ܒܗ ܒܝܬ ܓܒ ܠܗ . ܠ ܥܒܕ[6] ܒܝܫ[5] ܥܒܝܕܐ ܡܢܐ ܟ[7]
ܥܠܠ .

ܝܟܬ ܕ . ܟܬܝܒ ܒܥܠ ܒܠܟ ܟܡܐ ܒܥ ܟ ܒܥܒ ܐ ܟܡ {5}
ܒܠܐ[9] ܐܟܒ ܕܒ . ܥܟܝܠ ܠܐ[8] ܐܝܟ ܟܠ ܕܒ ܠܐ ܐܡܐ ܒܥܡ
. ܝܒܟ ܝܒ ܟ ܠ ܐܡܐ[12] ܐܝܐ[11] ܟܬܝܒ ܒܥ ܟܬܝܒ[10] ܟܩܐܐܩ
[14]ܐܡ* . ܒܠ[13] ܠܥܟ ܐ ܕܒ ܟܬܝ . ܝܟ ܟ ܠ ܒܝ ܐ {6}
[17]ܟܝ ܟ ܒ ܟ ܐ ܐ[16] ܒ {6.5} [15]ܒ ܐ ܟ ܠ ܟ ܐ
. ܟ ܟ ܠ [18]ܐ ܟ ܠ ܐ {6.8} .

ܝ ܟ ܒ ܟ ܟ ܟ [21]ܟ [20]ܒ ܕ [19]ܟ ܝ ܟ {7}
[23]ܟ ܐ ܟ [22]ܐ ܟ ܒ {7.1} ܒ ܟ
ܠ ܐ [28]ܐ {7.2} . [27]ܟ [26]ܐ [25] [24]ܐ
6b ܐ | ܠ ܐ ܐ {7.3} ܐ ܟ ܐ ܐ ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܟ {7.4} [29]ܟ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܠ ܟ ܟ [30]ܠ {8} ܟ
ܐ ܟ ܐ [31]ܐ ܟ . ܟ ܟ ܐ
ܒ {8.1} . [32]ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܟ ,
. ܟ ܒ [33]ܟ

[1] < S [2] ܐ ܟ R, i < S [3] + syāmē S [4] lege ܟܬܝܒ RS [5] i < S [6] i < S [7] i + ܐ S
[8] ܐܟܒ S [9] f < R [10] + ܟܩܐܐܩ S [11] ܟܬܝܒ S [12] lege i ܐ R [13] ܟܠܟ S [14] i + ܐ
R [15] * < S (hom) [16] i + ܐ S [17] i + ܐ R [18] f < R [19] < RS [20] ܒ S [21] ܐ S [22] f
< S [23] f ~ RS [24] ,ܟ S [25] lege ܟ S [26] ,ܟ S [27] lege? ܟ S [28] ܐ S
[29] ܐ S [30] i < S [31] lege ܐ S [32] ܐ R [33] + ܐ S

where you received a revelation from God?', and he said to me: 'What did you see | there?'[29] And I told him that I saw that the wild ass from 6a
the desert came and took the crown from his head and the earrings that he had.'[30] And he did not answer me anything evil, but said to me: 'Go in peace'.

{5} Then I left Bēt Parsāyē and went to Bēt Aramāyē,[31] preaching to them that they should bow in worship to one cross and not to many.[32] And when the bishops and leaders of Bēt Aramāyē heard about me they chased me from place to place {6} and then I left Shinar and went into the desert of the Sons of Ishmael. And when they saw that I had come to them, {6.5} I proclaimed to them a kingdom of ten great weeks. {6.8} And they built a cell for me, and dug for me this well.'

{7} I, now, Mar Yahb, when I had stayed with him seven days, Mar Sergius became ill and died, {7.1} and I enshrouded him and they put his bones in his cell, and they took his body and put it in a [house].[33] {7.2} Because he had prophesied to them something they liked and {7.3} had written and handed down | to them this book which they 6b
call 'Qur'an', {7.4} they embalmed him and put him in the grave with great pomp. {8} Next to his bones God performed a great miracle, as one man murdered his brother and the murderer said: 'The slave of the victim killed my brother'. And by means of the bones of Mar Sergius the killer became known before the eyes of all the people, {8.1} for right at that moment his hand withered.

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[29] The intermediate question 'from where did you receive this revelation' has probably been lost here; (cf. the other recensions), and the answer to this question has subsequently been adapted by means of the omission of the reference to Moses.

[30] The other recensions have asses trample the crown; the 'earrings' of Chosroes (ܕܪܥܥ) clearly derive from the graphically similar ܘܪܥܥ, 'and they trampled', as found in WS.

[31] The first name refers to Persia or more specifically its South Western areas on the Persian gulf; the second is central Iraq.

[32] About the issue of removing crosses, see above: Ch. 4, pp. 95–104. This description of the monk's cross breaking campaign is rather brief; the justification given for it in other recensions in the passage concerned is only to be found in this recension in the epilogue ({19}).

[33] 'House' is based on S; the *manuscrit de base* has 'dog'; it is unlikely that the redactor thought that the man whom he described as a thaumaturge was given to a dog, so we ought to presume that this is erroneous.

{9} ⸢ܐ⸣ܡܪ ܠܗ ܒܝܬ ܒܪ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܒܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܣܒ ܠܡܐ
{9.4}. ܐܡܪ ⁸ܐܝܟܐ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {9.5} ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ܡܫܟ
ܠܗ ⁹ܒܪ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {9.6}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ܐܝܟ ⁹ܒܪ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {9.7}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ܐܝܟ ⁹ܒܪ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {9.8}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ܐܝܟ ⁹ܒܪ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {9.9}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ

{10} ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.1}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.2}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.3}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.4}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.5}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.6}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.7}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.8}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.9}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ
ⁱ⁰ܒܪ ⁹ܐܝܟ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܕܐܒ ⁶ܐܝܟ ⁵ܕܐ {10.10}. ⁴ܐܢܐ ³ܐܝܟ ²ܕܐ ⁱ¹ܡܫܟ

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[1] ⸢ܐ⸣ܡܪ R [2] ܕܐ R, ܕܟ S [3] < S [4] < S [5] i + ܐ S [6] + ܐܡܪ S [7] f < RS [8] f + ̈ R [9] ܐܒܪܗܡ S [10] ܒܪܟ R [11] < S [12] ⸢ܐ⸣ S [13] ܐܡܪ ܐܟ S [14] < S [15] f < R [16] i < S [17] < S [18] ܐܡ ܐܝܟ S [19] < S [20] + ܐܡܪ R [21] ܠ ܐܡܪ S [22] + ܐܢ S [23] + ܒܪ ܠܡܐ ܐܡ ܐܡܪ ܘܟ ܐܡܪ R (ditt) [24] ܐܢ ܠ S [25] ܡܪ S [26] ⸢ܐ⸣ ~ S [27] < S [28] ܘܡ S [29] lege + syāmē R [30] * ~ S [31] lege i + ܐ RS [32] lege ܡܫܟ S

{9} Then, after Mar Sergius died, a man rose up from the Jews whose name was known as Kaʿb the Scribe, {9.2} and he was a teacher, a scribe, and a prophet for them. {9.4} He corrupted the teaching of Mar Sergius, {9.5} since he told them that the one about whom Christ said: 'Behold, after me the Paraclete will come to you' that |that| is Muḥammad.[34] {9.6} And lo, until our day they adhere to and follow this tradition that Muḥammad is the Paraclete.

{10} From his disciple, who was called Ḥakīm the White,[35] {10.1} I heard: 'In my youth, | my whole body was filled with leprosy, and I 7a
was also tempted by Satan and my parents chased me away from them. {10.2} While I was wandering in the desert, this Father Mar Sergius, whom they call 'Baḥīrā' and 'the Chosen One of God', found me and asked me: 'Why are you wandering through the desert all alone?' I then answered him: 'My parents chased me away from them, because I had this illness of leprosy and a foul ulcer'. {10.3} He answered me: 'If you believe in Christ Son of the Living God you will be cured'. I then answered him: 'If I will be cured I will believe'. Then he put his hand on me and cured me. {10.4} He pronounced the following, while he blessed my body and placed his right hand on my head: 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' and 'In the name of Jesus Christ', and that evil spirit left me. {10.5} Then I went immediately to my parents and when my parents saw that he had cured | my body, 7b
{10.6} they were struck with astonishment and surprise. {10.7} And when all the people in that desert had heard this, they brought a man to him who was very badly driven by a demon. He then made to him the sign of the cross and cured him entirely. They also brought a deaf and dumb boy to him. He cured him instantly and opened his mouth

[34] Cf. John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7. Muslim apologists regard Q 61:6 as a confirmation of Muḥammad's fulfilment of these prophecies of Christ. For the relevance of this theme to Muslim-Christian polemic, see below p. 303, and n. 106.

[35] The name of the disciple is noteworthy, as he is called *ḥwarā*, which literally means 'white', but also presumably constitutes a Syriac rendering of the Arabic word for a disciple of Christ: *ḥawārī*.

{10.8} ואם יחטא אחיך[1] לך והלך אליו והוכיחו[2] ביניך וביניו לבדו. אם ישמע לך הרווחת את אחיך.

{11} ואם לא ישמע עוד קח אתך אחד או שנים כי על פי שני עדים או שלשה יקום כל דבר[3] {11.1}. ואם יפלה[4] להקשיב להם אמור לקהל[5] {11.2} ואם גם לקהל לא יקשיב יהי לך כגוי[6] ולמוכס[7] {11.3}. אמן אני אומר לכם אשר כל אשר תאסרו[8] על הארץ יהיה אסור בשמים[9] ואשר תתירו על הארץ יהיה מותר בשמים {11.4}. עוד אני אומר לכם כי אם שנים מכם יסכימו על הארץ לכל דבר אשר יבקשו יעשה להם מאת אבי אשר בשמים {11.5}. כי אשר שני אנשים או שלשה יקבצו בשמי שם אני בתוכם {11.6}. אז קם פטרוס ויאמר אליו אדני כמה פעמים יחטא אחי לי ואסלח לו עד שבע פעמים. אמר לו ישוע לא אומר לך עד שבע פעמים כי אם עד שבעים פעמים שבע.

8a

על כן דמתה מלכות השמים לאיש מלך אשר רצה לשאת חשבון מאת עבדיו {12}. ויחל בעת הנתן לפניו ויובא אליו איש אחד חייב לו עשרת אלפים כסף[10] {12.1}. ואין לו לשלם ויצו אדוניו למכרו ואת אשתו ואת בניו ואת כל אשר לו ולשלם את החוב[11] {12.2}. ויפול העבד ויתחנן לפניו לאמר אדוני הואר נא לי ואשלם לך את כל החוב[12] {12.3}. וירחם אדון העבד ההוא וישלחהו לדרכו ויסלח לו את החוב[13] {12.4}. ויצא העבד ההוא וימצא אחד מעבדיו אשר חייב לו מאה כסף[14] ויתפש בו ויחנקהו לאמר שלם לי את אשר לך[15] {12.5}. ויפול עבדו לרגליו ויתחנן אליו לאמר הואר נא לי ואשלם לך[16] {12.6}. ולא אבה לשמוע אליו וילך וישלכהו בבית הכלא עד אשר ישלם את החוב[17] {12.7}. ויראו עבדיו את אשר נעשה ויחר להם מאד ויבואו ויגידו לאדוניהם את כל אשר נעשה.

8b

[1] + נא S [2] + אביו S [3] < R [4] + נא S [5] + נא R [6] < R, נוכרי S [7] מס S [8] < S [9] f מ S [10] בעד חבו S [11] + לו S [12] lege i < RS [13] < R [14] < R [15] בחבלו S [16] < S [17] < S [18] < S [19] בגדי R [20] lege < RS [21] + נא R [22] ¬ מלא בחמתו S [23] ~ (312) R [24] < S [25] ¬ ותלחצהו R [26] < S [27] אביו S [28] + אני S [29] + נא S

and ears, and he spoke and heard clearly. Another boy who was full of leprosy was purified. {10.8} And the Lord wrought many miracles through the hands of this Mar Sergius.

{11} And because there was no water in that desert in which they lived, they came to him continuously, they and their cattle, and they refreshed themselves at his water well. {11.1} This water well was also made to sprout for him at that place by our Lord Christ. {11.2} Everybody would approach him and ask him questions about everything. {11.3} And they would do everything he told them, because he taught them this belief | to which they adhere a little. {11.5} He prophesied to them 8a
and said: 'God will raise up a great man for you from amongst you {11.6} and kings of the earth will come forth from his loin and he will become very numerous on the earth and his name is Muḥammad'.

{12} And on a certain day when they were coming to the well, Baḥīrā was standing outside of his cell. He looked and saw them coming from far away, Muḥammad being with them. {12.1} And when he saw him, he knew that something great was to become of the boy, {12.2} as he saw a vision above him and he knew that in him his prophecy would be fulfilled. {12.3} When they arrived at the well, they went to him in the cell, according to their habit. {12.4} The boy Muḥammad was sitting outside at the well, saying to himself: 'When my brothers come out and leave, I will enter too'. {12.5} Then Mar Sergius Baḥīrā said to them: 'There is someone with you who is bound to become great'. They said to him: 'There is a | simple-minded foolish boy with us'. Father Sergius 8b
said to them: 'Call him, so that I can see him'. {12.6} And when he came in, Sergius stood up and sat down again. He told them about the vision that was above his head. {12.7} They, however, were not aware of the vision.

{13} ܡܛܠ[1] ܕܐܡܪ {13.1} ܐܝܟ[2] ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܚܪ ܕܟܠ ܡܕ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܘܐܙܠ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܠܗ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ[3] ܘܐܙܠ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܠܗ . ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܚܪ ܕܟܠ ܡܕ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܘܐܙܠ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܠܗ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ

{13} He then blessed him {13.1} and said to him: 'The Lord will magnify you and your sons after you, and you will become very mighty and numerous on the earth. Twelve kings will come forth from your loins, and their seat will be in the land of Babel.[36] Your kingdom will be mighty on the whole earth and they will conquer many areas and cities and they will defeat strong kings. And there will be peace in the whole world. There is not one kingdom that draws near to them which they will not defeat'.

{13.2} When Muḥammad had heard from Sergius that he had prophesied to him about his family and about him and his tribe, {14} he asked Sergius: 'From where did you receive this revelation?'

Sergius said: 'From Mount Sinai where Moses received | divine 9a
revelations'.

{14.2} Muḥammad said: 'For what reason?'

Sergius Baḥīrā said: 'You are destined to become a master and a king and a prophet and a leader and a head of your people. {14.3} Twenty-four kings will come forth from your loins and {14.4} you will convert the sons of your people from the worship of demons to the knowledge and worship of the One True God'.

{14.5} Muḥammad said: 'And you, which God do you worship?'

Mar Sergius said: 'The God who made heaven and earth, light and darkness, the seas and the rivers, the birds of the sky and the animals and the cattle and all that creeps on the earth, and all of mankind, together with the orders of fire and of spirit. Him they worship and praise and cry "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, by whose praises heaven and earth are filled".'[37]

{14.6} Muḥammad said: 'And where is the dwelling-place of the God about whom you say these things?' Sergius said: 'In heaven'.

{14.7} Muḥammad said: 'From | where do you know Him?' 9b

Sergius said: 'From His creation and from the ancient prophets'.

[36] WS has Shinar instead of Babel; both clearly refer to the fact that the ʿAbbasids chose Iraq as their centre of power.

[37] * Isa. 6:3.

{14.8} אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק[1] .

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק[2] משום רבי יוסי בן זמרא, שמעתי פיהו של רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק[3] כי אתא רבין אמר משום רבי יוחנן בן זכאי[4] .

{14.9} משום רבי יוחנן בן זכאי אמר[5] כי הוינן קא מהדרינן[6] אבתרא[7] של רבי יוחנן בן זכאי[8] אמרינן[9] כי היכי שלא יהא ספר אחד גדול מן השני .

{14.10} משום רבי יוחנן בן זכאי אמר .

אף אנו למדנו כן .

{14.11} משום רבי יוחנן בן זכאי אמר[10] כל המקיים את התורה כולה ומבטל אפילו דבר אחד[11] של תורה אפילו הוא מקיים את התורה כולה ומבטל דבר אחד[12] של תורה אפילו הוא מקיים את התורה כולה ומבטל דבר אחד[13] של תורה אף הוא מקיים את התורה כולה[14] שנאמר כי דבר ה' בזה[15] ואת מצותו הפר . הרי הוא מקיים את התורה כולה ומבטל דבר אחד של תורה[16] הרי הוא מבטל את התורה כולה . | אמר רבי יוחנן בן זכאי . 10a

{14.12} כל הרוצה שיהא תלמידו חביב עליו יהא עוסק בתורה ומצות, שכל הרוצה שיהא שמו גדול יהא עושה לו שם[17] .

{14.13} אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק .

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק[18] אמר אמרי .

{14.14} משום שמעון בן יהוצדק[19] אמר .

שמעון משום[20] יהודה, משום שמעון אמר[21].

{14.15} משום שמעון בן יהוצדק[22] אמר כל[23] הרוצה שיחכים[24] יעסוק בסדרים, שיעסוק בסדרים[25] אי[27] אפשי דלא בעי לאפוקי מידי דכתיב בהו בסדרים דמשמע דאיכא בהו חכמה[28] דלא איכא בתרוייהו משמע[29] דלא איכא בהו חכמה .

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[1] + הכהנה S [2] + בשם R [3] ~ S [4] + בן זכאי S (hom) [5] אומרים R [6] < S [7] < R [8] בן [9] + בן זכאי S [10] < R [11] משמע S [12] < S [13] < S [14] < S [15] < S [16] מתורה S [17] + בן זכאי בשם RS [18] < R [19] < R [20] < R [21] f משם S [22] < R [23] < S [24] + משום מה S [25] lege? + משום שם בשם אומר S [26] i + ר S [27] לאפוקי R [28] i ר S [29] < S (hom)

{14.8} Muḥammad said: 'Who are they, the prophets?'

Sergius said: 'They are righteous people, who fear God and keep His commandments. The Lord revealed himself to them through the Holy Spirit'.

{14.9} Muḥammad said: 'Who is the Holy Spirit?'

Sergius said: 'The Spirit of God, who is sent from Him to whoever fears Him and does His will'.

{14.10} Muḥammad said: 'You, whom do you worship?'

Sergius said: 'The Living God'.[38]

{14.11} Muḥammad said: 'And people, whom did they worship of old?'

Sergius said: 'Some of them |worshipped| fire, some of them stones, some of them stars, some of them trees, some of them demons, and some of them graven images. And when God saw all this erring in the world He pitied the race of man and sent prophets to them and they turned the peoples from the false worship of the demons to the knowledge of Truth and to the worship of One | God'. 10a

{14.12} Muḥammad said: 'Which one of those do you worship and what is your belief?'.

Sergius said: 'I am a Christian and I worship the One God'.

{14.13} Muḥammad said: 'What is Christianity?'

Sergius said: 'It is the faith that Christ taught us'.

{14.14} Muḥammad said: 'Who is Christ?'

Sergius said: 'Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit'.[39]

{14.15} Muḥammad said: 'Is he a prophet or a human being like you and me?'

Sergius said: '[The human being in whom God dwelled.] The Word of God was sent from heaven through Gabriel the Archangel to Mary the Virgin, who descended from Abraham and from the seed of David. And she conceived without intercourse through the power of the Holy Spirit, and she gave birth to a son without intercourse as the prophets had prophesied'.[40]

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[38] For a discussion of the ways in which Baḥīrā explains his faith, see Ch. 4, pp. 104–113.

[39] See above, Ch. 4, pp. 105–113, for a discussion of the role of this Qur'anic Christology in each of the recensions.

[40] Cf. Isa 7:14, Luke 1:28–35.

{14.18} ואמרו אל אלוהיהם[1] מה[2] אתם אכלים .
כי[3] אלוהי מים חיים אתה כי תשים אותנו ואנחנו אכלים
10b את בשר[4] הנבלות והדגים | אל מים .
{14.19} ויאמר אליהם אחיה[5] אכלו .
ויאמרו אליו[6] כי[7] מה[8] יהיה לחם כי אין .
{14.20} ויאמר אליהם אחיה[9] אכלו .
ויאמרו אליו[10] הלחם .
{14.21} ויאמר אחיה[11] אמרו[12] אל .
ויאמר אחיה[13] כי אין לחם[14] בכל הארץ אשר אתם
אכלים שם . ואתם ,מאכלו אכילת בשר ,ואל
תשתו את המים . כי אם תשתו ,ומאכלכם יהיה
כי יתום אחיה לחם חיתום בחרבן אחיו ל ,ואת מחשבת
ואל[15] תשתו את המים . אותו אחיה אמר
{14.22} ויאמר[16] אחיה[17] אל אחיהם אשר בא אליו[18] ויאמר[19]
אל[20] אחיו אחיהו לחם בעד אשר הלכה
ויאמר[21] אחיה אליה[22] כי[23] אחיה[24] אם אתה[25] אשר בא
11a אתה אמה . אחיה שאלת | אמרה . אחיה את אתרוגיה אתאבלה
אמונה ,מאכלו אחיה אמרו ,כה . אליהו אוכל אתכם אחיה
לה אשתו[26] .

[1] i + ה S [2] < S [3] i + ה R [4] אנחנו R [5] < R [6] < R [7] < S [8] אחיה S [9] < R [10] < R [11] < R
[12] i < S [13] < R [14] מחלאים S [15] syāmē < RS [16] i < R [17] f + ם S [18] i + ה S [19] < R
[20] אחיהם כי אחיהו S [21] < R [22] < S [23] אחיה S [24] i + ו S [25] i < S [26] אשתה S

{14.18} Muḥammad said: 'How did the Virgin give birth without intercourse?'

Sergius said: 'The Spirit of God descended from heaven and the Word clothed himself with a body from the Virgin, and she gave birth to a son without | intercourse and God came to be in a human being'. 10b

{14.19} Muḥammad said: 'And where is Christ now?'

Sergius said: 'After he rose from the grave he went to heaven'.

{14.20} Muḥammad said: 'And how long was he in the grave?'

Sergius said: 'Three days'.

{14.21} Muḥammad said: 'And what was the cause of his death?'

Sergius said: 'Willingly he came to the passion and not by force, and he delivered himself up into the hands of the Jews, the oppressors, and they crucified him in Jerusalem.[41] He died and he was put in the grave and on the third day he rose from the grave and showed himself to his disciples and he gave them certainty about his resurrection. He stayed on earth for forty days and after that he went up to heaven and took seat at the right hand of God, in the heavenly holiest of holy, above the principalities and powers.[42] And as he came to be, likewise will be done to the whole of his race'.[43]

{14.22} Muḥammad said: 'Why do you worship a crucified man?'.

Sergius said: 'It is Him I worship, in the man by whom He worked many miracles and wonders on earth and whom | he raised with Him 11a to heaven and through whom He will bring about the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, for He is the adorable God in his invisible nature'.

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[41] This recension is the only to mention Christ's voluntary way to the cross, in anticipation of the critique that if Christ did not want to be crucified, he must have been incapable to prevent it and therefore powerless and not divine. This issue, already discussed in pre-Islamic times, appears in the earliest debates between Muslims and Christians, in which Christians tried to explain that even if Christ wanted to be crucified, it cannot be maintained that the Jews therefore fulfilled the will of God. See for example: Griffith, 'Some unpublished Arabic sayings', pp. 30–31 (ttr); Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, pp. 116–118; Caspar, 'Les versions arabes du dialogue', pp. 143–146 (t), pp. 167–169 (tr). The word translated as 'oppressors', *ṭlūmē*, is a standard term for the Jews in Syriac literature and has the connotation of suppressing the truth and accusing falsely. See for example the emphatic use of it in the *Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, in Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius*, vol. 1, p. 24 (t), vol. 2 (tr).

[42] Cf. Eph. 1:21.

[43] The last phrase refers to the idea that Christ's resurrection is the proof of the future resurrection of all humans.

{15} ואמר[1] ואיך[2] . כי אם אמר אליהם אל תבכו
אחרי[3] שהוא[4] .

{15.1} ויקחו[5] את הילד[6] ויאכל[7] ויתן לאמו[8] ויאכל[9] . ותאמר[10] לא . ואמר כי אם
11a ישן[11] הילד[12] ויקץ[13] . ותאמר[14] לא . ואמר[15] כי אם | את הילד
ויאכל ויתן לאמו . ואמר כי אם ראה את אשר עשה
אביו ואת אשר עשה אחיו ואת אשר אמר כי יכבד
את אחיו . {15.3} ואת אשר אמר אליו
ואת אשר[16] אמר[17] אל[18] אחיו[19] . ואמר[20] אל[21] אמו
ואל אחיו . ואמר[22] אל[23] אמו[24] כי אם[25] אל
12a אחיו[26] | ואל אמו[27] .

[1] i + ה S [2] < R [3] ך < S [4] + ,אם RS [5] ויקח S [6] < S (hom) [7] ויאכלו S [8] i ו R
[9] ויאכלו R [10] ותאמר ,ותענה RS [11] הילד S [12] i + ו S [13] ויקץ R, i + ה S [14] i
< R [15] ך < S [16] ואת אשר R [17] f + ו S [18] ,אל אחיו RS [19] < S [20] + ואמר R,
ואל אביו S [21] < S [22] ך < S [23] i + ו S [24] i < S [25] i < S [26] i + ה S [27] < S

{15} Muḥammad said: 'Ask me anything you desire and I will do it for you, if these things will happen to me like you have told me'. {15.1} Sergius said: 'I make a request to you on behalf of the Christians, the followers of Christ, that those who will come forth from your loins and your religion will not shed the blood of Christian people, who have put on Christ. There are people among them who are dressed like me, and they are called 'monks', {15.2} being priests and deacons. They abandoned |their| parents and brothers and houses and cities and everything in the world, and they went out to the desert and the wilderness, and they built monasteries and convents. And they are humble, neither haughty nor arrogant.[44] They fear God and keep his commandments, and they do not care for anything in the world,[45] nor do they have women or sons. Nay, all their hope depends on | God. 11b
And therefore they set themselves apart and they abandoned the world, and they pray and beseech God, for the kings and the judges, for the righteous and the wicked, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life.[46] {15.3} And when you treat them with this kindness, God will lengthen your life and also that of your sons after you. He will make them great and your kingdom will increase during all the years of the life of the world. And no kingdom that rises against them will be able to defeat them. None will defeat you, {15.4} except the kingdom of the Romans, which has sought recourse with the cross, which is the strong, invincible weapon, on which Christ, Saviour of the world, was crucified'.

{16} Then Muḥammad said to Mar Sergius: 'Everything you ask will be for you, but how will they believe in me, not knowing a book?'

Mar Sergius said to him: 'I will teach you everything'.

{16.1} Muḥammad said: 'I fear that they will not recognize me and that they will kill you and do me harm, and that they will regard me as an impostor.'

{16.2} Sergius said: 'I will teach you everything at night, and you teach them during the day'.

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[44] An echo of Q 5:82; for the importance of this verse and of Muḥammad's promise to protect the Christians under his rule, see above: Ch. 4, pp. 113–121.

[45] Cf. Luke 21:34.

[46] Cf. 1 Tim 2:2.

{16.3} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܦܛܪܘܣ ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ[1] ܐܢ ܐܢܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ[2] ܐܘ
ܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ
ܐܦ ܒܗܕܐ ܫܥܬܐ ܐܬܝܬ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ[3] ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ
ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[4] ܕܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܫܘܠܛܢ[5] ܒܫܡܝܐ
ܘܒܐܪܥܐ[6] ܚܠܦ ܕܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܬܝ ܠܝ ܫܘܠܛܢ .

{16.4} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܦܛܪܘܣ[7] ܐܢ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ
ܐܢܬ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ[8] ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ .

ܫܡܥܘܢ ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ[9] ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[10] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ .

{16.5} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܦܛܪܘܣ[11] ܐܢ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ
ܐܢܬ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ[12] ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ[13] ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ[14] ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[15] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ[16] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ[17] ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ .

{16.6} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ[18] ܐܢ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ[19] ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[20] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ[21] ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ
ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܦܛܪܘܣ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ[22] | ܐܘ
12b ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ .

{16.7} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܦܛܪܘܣ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ
ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[23] *ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[24] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ[25] ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[26] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[27] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[28] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[29] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[30] ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ
ܐܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ[31] .

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[1] ] < S [2] i < R [3] < R [4] ܕܐܝܬ ܠܝ R [5] < S [6] ܒܫܡܝܐ S [7] < R [8] ] < S (hom) [9] < R
[10] syāmē < S [11] < R [12] i + ɔ R, ܘܐܡܪ S [13] < R [14] i < S [15] + ܘܐܡܪ S [16] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ
S [17] ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ R [18] i + ɔ R [19] < R [20] ] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ S [21] ] < S
[22] < R [23] < R [24] ] ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ R, * < S [25] < R [26] < R [27] i < R [28] ] ܐܡܝܢ S
[29] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ S [30] ܐܡܝܢ S [31] i < S

{16.3} Muḥammad said: 'And if they say to me: "From where did you receive this vision or teaching?", what shall I say to them?'.

Sergius said: 'Say to them "The angel Gabriel has come to me at night and he has taught me all that will happen".'

{16.4} Muḥammad said: 'And if they say to me: "What is there in the other world?", what shall I say to them?'.

Sergius said: 'Say to them that there is a paradise and trees and that the best of all things are there.'

{16.5} Muḥammad said: 'And if they say to me: "What will we eat and drink there?", what shall I say to them?'.

Sergius said: 'Say to them: "you will eat and drink and enjoy in paradise", and "there are four rivers there, one of honey, one of milk, one of wine and one of water".'[47]

{16.6} Muḥammad said: 'When I say to them: "you will eat and drink in paradise" they will say to me: "there is food and drink there and nature's call".'[48]

Sergius said: | 'Say to them: "it will disappear from the body like sweat".' 12b

{16.7} Muḥammad said: 'And when I say to them: "you will eat and drink in paradise and enjoy" and they say to me: "we cannot endure there without intercourse", what shall I say to them?'

Sergius said: 'You tell them also: "there are beautiful young girls there with big eyes and beautiful appearances and with lovely looks, who are very plump. Seven will be given to each man".'[49]

{16.8} Muḥammad said: 'And if I say: "fast and pray" and they say to me: "we will not pray and fast all day" what shall I say to them?'

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[47] Cf. Gen 2:10; Q 47:15.

[48] For the polemical exchanges between Muslims and Christians on the issue of 'nature's call' (lit. 'the necessity of the body') in heaven, see above: Ch. 4, pp. 121–128.

[49] These words allude to the references in the Qur'an to the heavenly Houris. See for example: Q 44:54, Q 52:20, Q 55:72, Q 56:22, Q 37:48–49, Q 38:52, Q 55:56. The idea that there will be seven of these virgins for each believer originates in the extra-Qur'anic elaborations on the theme of the delights of heaven. See el-Ṣaleḥ, *La vie future selon le Coran*.

{16.9} ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ[1] ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕ[2]ܐܬܪ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܗ ܘܐܡܗ ܕ[3]ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗ ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕ[4]ܐܬܪ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܗ ܘܐܡܗ ܕ[3]ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗ ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕ[2]ܐܬܪ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܗ ܘܐܡܗ ܕ[3]ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗ ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕ[4]ܐܬܪ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܗ ܘܐܡܗ ܕ[3]ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗ ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܕܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܗ ܫܘܓܫܐ ܕܫܘܓܫ ܒܗ ܒܥܠ ܒܝܬܐ ܕ[2

{16.9} Sergius said: 'Command |them| to fast thirty days only and say to them: "eat and drink all night until you can distinguish a white from a black thread".'[50]

{16.10} Muḥammad said: 'And if they say to me: "what is allowed to us to eat and drink and from [what] should we abstain?", what shall I say to them?'

Sergius said: 'Warn them | against wine, fornication, gluttony, pork 13a
and anything strangled and carrion, against murder, false witnessing, hypocrisy, adultery and drunkenness, and against theft, rapine and oppression.[51] Treat the orphans and widows justly,[52] and honor your father and your mother, so that days of your life will be many on the earth.[53] [Then] your sins will be forgiven.'

{16.12} Muḥammad said: 'And where should one pray to God every day?'.

Sergius said: 'Build a house for God and pray five times a day and twice at night, every day of your lives. And strike the sounding-board. {16.13} And let Friday be distinguished for you and more honored than all other days. And make a great congregation on it and a fixed prayer, because |on that day| you |will| have received the Law'.[54]

{16.14} Muḥammad said: 'And if they say to me: "give us a testimony that your promise to us is true" what shall I say to them?' | 13b

Sergius said: 'I will write a book for you and teach it to you. And on Friday I will put it on the horn of a cow and you go and gather all of the sons of your people in one place. Sit down with them and say to them: "know that today God sends to you from heaven a great book of commandments and laws according to which you shall live every day of your lives". And when you see the cow coming, stand up from your place, go towards her and take the book from her horn in the presence of all of them. And say to them: "this book descended from heaven, from God. The earth was not worthy to receive it, so this cow

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[50] Cf. Q 2:187.

[51] Cf. Matt. 15:19, Luke 21:34, Acts 15:29.

[52] Isa. 1:17.

[53] Cf. Ex. 20:12, cf. Matt. 19:19, Luke 18:20, Eph 6:2.

[54] For the sake of clarity the words 'on that day' have been added by me on the basis of WS, which gives 'because on it you received…', i.e. on that day; see A1 (p. 409 and n. 33) where the story of the cow bringing the Qur'an serves an explanation of why Friday is the day of communal worship in Islam, and A2, p. 485, n. 90.

ܡܢܬܐ ܒܝܬ ܡܨܥ ,ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ {16.15} ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܝ ܡܠܟܬܐ
. ܫܡܝܐ ܫܪܝ .

ܫܡܥܘ ܫܡܥ ܠܝ ܐܡ ,ܡܠܟܐ ܐܠܗܝ ܒܫܡܥ ܕܐܡ {16.16}
ܕܝܢ ܐܡ ܒܝܬ ܐܠܗܐ . ܫܡܝܐ ܫܡܝ ܕ ܐܝܟ ,ܐܡܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܪܝܐ 14a
ܐܡܬ ܒܫܠܝܚܘܬ ܡܢ . ³ܒܫܡ ,²ܐܬܐ ¹ܐܝܟ ܡ ܒܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܫܡ
. ܐܡܬ ,ܒܫܠܝܚ ܐܢ ܐܝܫ ܒܟܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܡܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܡܬ

. ⁵ܒܫܥܬܐ ܒܪ ܐܡܟܬܒܐ ܡܐܡܪ ܒܫܘܐ ܒܝܬ ܐܡܬ ܐܡܪ ܐܒܪ {17}
⁸ܐܝܟ ܐܝܟ ܫܟܚܬ ܫܒܚ ܫܒܝ ܡܫܝܚ ܫܠܡ ⁷ܡܐ ⁶ܐܒܪ
ܡܫܬܒܚ {17.1} . ܗܘ ܗܘ ܫܡܫ ܡܫܝܚ ܫܐ ܥܒܕ ܫܒܚ ܫܡ
ܒ ⁹ܫܒܚ ܫܐܡܪ ,ם ܐܡܬ ⁶ ܒܥܠ ܡܫܬܒܚ ܠ ܚܝܘ
ܒܥܐ ܠܟ {17.2} ¹¹ܒܝܕ ܐܡܫܒܚ ¹⁰ܐܡܫܒܚ
. ܫܠܚ ܘܥܒܕ ¹ ¹ ¹

received it on her horn".' {16.15} And until this day it is called the 'Scripture of the Cow'.[55]

{16.16} Because he was a humble, simple boy, Muḥammad liked the daily teaching of Mar Sergius. And he wrote | for them this book which 14a they call 'Qurʾan', at the hands of Muḥammad. They studied it every day of their lives until the death of Baḥīrā, he who prophesied to them.

{17} He said that all these things are bound to happen in the days of the Sons of Ishmael, saying: 'There will be much suffering and slaughter and famine and plague in every region, and a quake in heaven and great bloodshed in many places.[56] {17.1} And cities will be overturned upon their inhabitants and in them will be fulfilled that which the blessed David said: 'their graves |are| their houses forever and their dwelling place for generations',[57] {17.2} because the Lord despised his people and He let not live His inheritance, who are the sons of the Promised Land.[58]

{17.3} And in the year 1055 of Alexander, son of Philip, King of the Romans, the Arabs killed their king and after that there was much

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[55] In reality this name refers to the second chapter of the Qur'an only, which is the longest chapter of the Qur'an and the most important from the point of view of divine commandments. The name is taken from the short passage about Moses commanding his people to sacrifice a cow (Q 2:67–71). The above passage creates the impression that it is a separate book. The only other surviving text that appears to do so as well is the East-Syrian *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē*. Crone and Cook read that text in the light of early (Christian and Muslim) references to the 'collection of the Qur'an' and argued that it can support the hypothesis that the Qur'an is 'the product of the belated and imperfect editing of materials from a plurality of traditions' (Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, p. 18). That this chapter had a special status can be shown (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 471 and n. 56) but this is not the same as circulating separately. Moreover, caution is needed when it comes to these Syriac texts. The Arabic word *sūra* resembles the Syriac *ṣurtā*, which means the *text of a Scripture* in general. If Muslims mentioned their '*Sūrat al-Baqara*' it could sound to Syriac speakers as if they were speaking about a whole book. See also the remarks of Griffith in his 'The Qur'ān in Arab Christian Texts', p. 20, and Ch. 5, p. 112, for the confusion of *sūra* and *ṣūra* in non-Muslim Arabic texts.

[56] The prophecies of the monk that appear in this section form a more elaborate version of the vision recounted in {3}. For the identification of the individual figures, see above Ch. 3.

[57] Ps. 49:11–12.

[58] Cf. Ps. 106:40.

14b ܟܠܗ[2]ܒܗ | ܒܗ[1]ܐܡ ,ܟܝ ܟܕ {17.4} . ܟܚܕ ܠ ܟܠܗ ܐܡ ܟܠ ܐܡ . ܐ ܟܝ ܕܝ ,ܟ . ܟܠܬܒ ܒܗ ܐܡ ܐ ܒܗ ܟܠ ܟܠ ܐ ܟ ,ܟ ܐ ܟ ,ܟ ܐ ܟ ,ܟ

unrest in the world during one week.[59] {17.4} And in that very year | 14b
the word of God toward the Ishmaelites was fulfilled, as 'he will beget twelve great leaders' and 'lo, twelve kings will come forth from his loin'.[60] The kingdom of the rulers of the Sons of Ishmael came to an end.

{17.7} Then the kingdom of the Sons of Muḥammad. That is: the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael will come to an end, and it will be given to your youngest son Hāshim, he whom you love.[61] {17.8} He will come from a foreign land on the wind of the North in the likeness of a dark cloud that covers the whole earth.[62] {17.9} And they are the Sons of Hāshim. Eight kings will come forth from of his loin. {17.10} Woe to the people in the time when the Sons of Hāshim reign. {17.11} He called them and said [about them] that they are 'the carnal ones', the dark scepter, which is sent in order that God chastise the world through them {17.12} with the rod of anger, 'the Assyrian', in accordance with the words of the Prophet Isaiah who said that {17.13} the coming of the Sons of Hāshim on the whole earth will be | in the likeness of 15a
'the Assyrian'.[63] {17.14} He calls them haughty, proud and vainglorious, and they let the hairs of their head grow like women. {17.16} They are not satisfied with anything {17.19} and they will shed the blood of the people like water. {17.20} Through them there will be severe famine and plague everywhere, and slaughter and bloodshed. {17.21} And people will sell their sons for the poll-tax. {17.22} And they will enslave free men and women. {17.23} And they will not have mercy on the old people and the infants. {17.24} People will become food for the birds and the beasts of the earth.[64] {17.25} His yoke will be seven times heavier on the world than that of their brothers. {17.26} And the people will not count for anything in their eyes. {17.28} And they will

[59] The allusions are to the collapse of the Umayyads, for which see Ch. 3, pp. 66–69. Because these events had already taken place, the future tense was changed into the past tense in several phrases; from {17.7} the text changes again into a prophecy.

[60] The first prophecy is Gen 17:20; the second is only a paraphrase. WS is more logical here: the second phrase is in the future tense and functions as a confirmation of the fulfillment of the prophecy; cf. WS, p. 321.

[61] It is unclear who is being addressed here as 'you'; perhaps it reflects the context of the monk's conversations with Muḥammad, to whom he could have recited his prophecy. Such a set-up occurs in A1.

[62] Cf. Ezek 38:9, 38:16.

[63] Cf. Isa 10:5; the 'carnal ones' (*pagrānē*, cf. 1Cor 3:1–4?) seems to be wrong; WS also has a word beginning with *pe* which seems incorrect as well: WS, p. 357 and n. 63.

[64] *Jer 7:33.

ملحه {17.30} ابعدا [1]ماعد حدابحه {17.29} لهلم لحده ماحده
ماحدلهده ماحلا ماحاحه [2]لحدا ماهدحد لهلهاحدلح لهماهلد
ماحلاهده ماهلد حد {17.32} ماحاد ماحلا لحدا لهلهاه {17.31}
ماهدحه لهلم [3]لحدا لحدلهلحده {17.33}. ماحاد ماهلعد لهلهاهه
15b لحدا ماحاد ماحلهلهه {17.35} . [6]لحححد [5]حا | [4]حد هل لهلهاه [3]ماحلا
ماحلم هلاد {17.36} ماحده عمد حداد [9]حد [8]ماحاد حد [7]ماحاد حتا
{17.38} . هلاححد حد [11]لحدا لحلاهلهه {17.37} . ماحلا حد [10]لححلحا
ماحلهلحه {17.39} ماحتحا [13]ماحححه [12]ماحلحلهلهه ماحا لهمد حا هد
[15]لهمحلا ماحتد حد ماحلا حلاحلهه {17.40} ماحتاما [14]ماححد
ماحاد . لهلهاحلد لحد لهلحده حا ماحتد لهلهاد لحد [16]لحلهاحد حا
[18],لهلححلحده . هاحاد حاحد حا هاحدا ماححده [17]ناد حا ماحاد ,لهلحا
{17.42}. لهلهاد ماحححلحد [20]لحده لهلحلحدا ماححده {17.41} . هلحد [19]حتا
ماحلاه لهلهحلا ماحهه . لهحلهد ماحاد [21]لحده لهلحلحلهلا ماحلهه
[24]ماحده ماحلهاحده لحد لهحلا ماححده لهاهلده [23]ماحلحده [22]لهلهلا
. ماحلاحد حد ماحاده ماحاحد حد لهاحلا ماحلاده {17.43} . ماحاد لحد
حتا لهلهلحلحد حاحد ماحا حد لهاحلا ماحلاده [25]ماحده لهاحلا ماحححلحه
. حاهم [26]ماحاد
16a . [27]ححلم حتا لهلهلحلحد ماهلحدا | ماحلحد حاهم لهلهاحه {17.51}
. ماحلد ماححده ماحاد لحد ماهلهاحدلح لهلهد ماحححد ماهلهاد {17.52}
لهلا ماحححلحه . ماححد حد هلهلد [28]ماححد . هاهلدا ماهلحد ها ماحلهلهه
ححلا لحدا ماحاده . ماحححد لهاهلا [29]ماحاد هلحاحلحه ماحاحح حاهاد
ماحححلحد ماحاد حاحد لحححاحد حتا {17.53} . ماحلحد حتا لهلاد حلاحه
هلد ححلا ماححد لهحه {17.54} . ماحده هلححه لحد ماحد هاد لحه ماحححد
. ماحهم [30]ماحلحه

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[1] ماحاد S [2] ] لحدا هلحدحا RS [3] ] ماحلحه ماهلحلحه ماحححد لهلهاد R [4] < S [5] + حاحلحد S [6] i + ه S [7] ] ماححلحد RS [8] lege ] < S [9] i + ه R [10] لححلحلحا S [11] ماحاد S [12] لهلحلحلهلا R [13] < R [14] i + ר R [15] i < S [16] i < S [17] ] ~ (3412) R [18] lege + ماحححلا RS (im R) [19] ماحاد R [20] i < R [21] i < R [22] لهلهلا S [23] + ماحححلحه لهلححلحلحه R, + ماحححلحه لهلححلحد S [24] + syāmē RS [25] i < R [26] ] ماحححلحد RS [27] + لححلحد ماهلحلحلحد R [28] i + ه RS [29] ماحاد R, ماححلحد S [30] ماحلحد S

uproot the cities of the ancient kings and they rebuild them {17.29} and they will enlarge the walls of Shinar. {17.30} All their glory and might will be in the city of Babel, and in the land of the Chaldeans they will glorify themselves. {17.31} And the kings of the earth will come to Babel, {17.32} bound in fetters and their honored ones in iron chains.[65] {17.33} And all the cities of the kings will be subdued to Babel and they will come to it from | all nations. {17.35} And the land of Babel will 15b
be filled with people from the four winds of heaven, {17.36} like locusts that are gathered by a whirlwind. {17.37} And Babel will be tormented by its inhabitants.[66] {17.38} In that time the wisdom of the wise will be despised {17.39} and the knowledge of the ignorant will be glorified. {17.40} And people will be destitute of love. And fathers will not love their sons, and sons will not have respect for their fathers. A brother will not keep the truth for his brother.[67] A man will not reveal his secret to his son and a man's enemies are the men of his own house.[68] {17.41} Slaves will rule and march in triumph on chariots and {17.42} free men will be despised and will walk on the earth. Old men will be mocked and youngsters will be honored. The rich will go bankrupt. Slaves will sit on thrones and the master on the ground. {17.43} And trees will be deprived of fruits and the earth of crops. Springs will dry up and they will not sprout forth as usual, because of the evil of these men. {17.51} All these things are bound to | happen in the days of the Sons 16a
of Hāshim. {17.52} Signs will be in the sky and mighty acts on earth.[69] And the sun will become dark, and the moon will not show its light.[70] Dust will come down from heaven and stars will fall like leaves, and they will appear in the sky like spears. The land of Babel will tremble and quake twice on a day. {17.53} And the Sons of Ishmael will be numerous like stars in the sky and like sand at the seaside. {17.54} [If they could, they would convert the whole people to their worship and their belief.][71]

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[65] * Ps 149:8.
[66] Cf. Isa 49:19.
[67] Cf. Matt. 10:21.
[68] Micah 7:6.
[69] Acts 2:19.
[70] * Matt. 24:29, Mark 13:24, cf. Isa. 13:10.
[71] Phrase based on WS; ES has a similar but incomplete phrase ('If he could, he would be the whole world').

{17.56} ܗܘ ܕܡ[1] ܕܐ ܕ[2]ܐܬ ܕ[3]ܐܡܝܢ ܐܬ ܗܘ[4] ܕܐ ܐ[5]ܠ . ܐܡܪ ܐܡܪ ܐ[6]ܡ ܕ[7]ܐ ܐܡܪ ܐ
ܕ ܐ .

{17.57} ܐ ܕ ܐ ܕ ܐ ܐ ܐ

{17.56} Then the Sons of Ishmael and the Sons of Abraham will split in two and kill and plunder and destroy each other and they will be left to themselves, because their end is near and because of the completion of their days.[72]

{17.57} Hāshim will father eight sons. Two with one name. Two from the Torah. One with three signs and another with seven. Another with five. {17.58} And when all these things have been fulfilled: know that the kingdom of the Sons of Hāshim has come to an end. {17.59} Then they will wake up as if from sleep and stand up | against each other. 16b
And every one of them will say about himself: 'I am the king'. {17.60} God will let them go their way, and He will incite them against each other.[73] {17.61} And their end will be brought about by themselves, because they became corrupted. And the earth is filled by them.

{17.62} Then God will entrust the kingdom of the Sons of Hāshim into the hands of Mahdī, son of Fāṭima, and all kingdoms and tribes of the Sons of Ishmael await him. {17.63} And God will recompense them for their deeds. {17.64} He will uproot the city of Babel and destroy its stronghold and pull down its walls. {17.66} In it will be fulfilled: 'Woe to you Shinar, woe to you city of the Chaldeans.[74] {17.67} You raised yourself up to heaven, to Sheol you will be brought down.'[75] And Babel will be the laughingstock and disgrace. And all who pass it will hiss[76] and say: 'where is your glory, mother of cities, who subdued kings with your tyranny?'

{17.68} And in the days of Mahdī, son of Fāṭima, there will be peace on earth, the like of which was never before in the world. And behold, he observes all | commandments and laws of his father Muḥammad, 17a
all days of his life and of the sons after him. {17.69} And from the first

[72] WS indicates a schism between the Sons of Hāshim and the Sons of Umayya here.

[73] 'God will let them go their way' is a translation of 'the abandonment of God will occur', which means that God no longer intervenes in the chaos of the world and gives a 'carte blanche' for evil behavior. Michael the Syrian describes how the question of whether such a 'mode' in the divine economy existed was debated by his coreligionists; Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. 4, p. 634 (t), vol. 3, p. 269 (tr).

[74] Cf. Rev 18:10.

[75] Cf. Isa 14:14–15, Matt. 11:23, Luke 10:15.

[76] Cf. Jer 50:13.

ܟܬܒ ܡܢ ܐܝܟ ܡܐܢܐ [1]ܕܡܫܟܚ ܟܬܒ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܫܟܚ ܒ ܒܝܡܐ
ܚܠܡܐ [2]ܕܐܡܗܝܡܢ ܐܫܬ ܟܠܝܠ ܟܬܒ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܫܬ .

{17.71} ܫܠܡ . ܟܬܒ ܟܬܒ ܠܚܒܝܒ ܟܬܒ ܡܫܟܚ ܟܬܒ ܒ ܒܝܡܐ ܒܝܡܐ
ܒܪܝܐ ܒܡܫܟܚ ܕܡܫܟܚ [3]ܕܐܡܗܝܡܢ ܕܐܡܗܝܡܢ
ܟܬ ܠ [4]ܠ ܕܐܡܝܢܐ ܒܪ ܠ ܕܐܡܝܢ ܒ ܒܪ ܠ ܕ
ܟܬ ܠ ܫܡܫ ܡܠ ܟܫܡ ܡܠ {17.72} . ܬܒܝܢ ܒܪ ܠ [5]ܟܬܒ ܕܐܡ
ܟܬ ܠ ܫܡܫ ܡܠ ܟܫܡ ܡܠ {17.72} . ܬܒܝܢ ܒܪ ܠ [5]ܟܬܒ ܕܐܡ
ܠ [7]ܟ ܪܥܝ ܟܬܒ [6]ܒܪ ܠ ܟ ܒܪ ܟܬܒ ܕܐܡ ܠܐ .
ܠ ܡܬܪܡ ܠܕܒܪ . ܠܟܫܝ ܡ ܒܝܠ ܠ . ܒ ܠܠ ܟܬܒ ܡܐ

Muḥammad to the last Muḥammad, the one with whom their kingdom will come to end, there will be twenty-five kings, sons of Muḥammad.[77]

{17.71} Then people dressed in clothes of blood will go out from the East. Their scheming and anger and wrath will be against the Sons of Ishmael. And they will make them get up and chase them up to the mountain of Yathrib.[78] {17.72} They have neither mercy nor pity for the Sons of Ishmael. And they kill them with the edge of the sword, from men to women, from children to infants. They will not have mercy for pregnant women and they will smash their infants against a rock,[79] because they are sent for a speedy end.[80]

{17.73} And then the Sons of Joktan will come from the North, who are the yearling goat, and they will reach the Promised Land, who are the people of Qaṭar. Then | the sons of the earth shall fear. 17b

{17.74} Then comes a lion that eats everything and tramples everything and will say: 'I am the Mahdī who is sent by God as a messenger to convert the world to one belief and to the knowledge of truth'. And there will be much persecution the like of which was never before. {17.76} And all his anger and wrath |will be| on the Sons of Israel and especially on the people that chose Christ for its name. {17.78} He will uproot churches and monasteries and places of congregation. And he will pull down the altars and there will be a lot of blood among the people. {17.79} There will be many deaths by famine and deaths by the edge of the sword. {17.80} Many of the sons of the church will stray from the truth and they will follow him in order to worship demons and bring sacrifices to them. And those who repent are one in ten. {17.83} And then people will begin to say to the mountains 'Fall upon us!', and to the hills 'Cover us!'.[81] {17.85} And whoever perseveres to the end will live.[82] {17.86} God does not send him to the world out of love, but because of the wickedness of the people which is great

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[77] In {17.9} eight Hāshimī kings are predicted, in contrast to {3.13} where they are seven, as in the other recensions. Here we see that the total of the kings has been adapted to this new number, which means that the variant reading of {17.9} is not a mere scribal error. It is possible that this intervention in this recension reflects an update of the apocalypse during the time of the ʿAbbasid Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim, the eighth ʿAbbasid Caliph.

[78] See above, p. 255, n. 4.

[79] Cf. Isa 13:16, 18.

[80] Cf. Dan 9:26–27.

[81] * Luke 23:30, cf. Hos 10:8.

[82] Matt 24:13, Mark 13:13.

18a | ܬܬܚ ܒܢܝܢܗ . ܟܠܚ ܚܙܐ ܟܬܒ ܠܟ[1]ܢ ܟܠܚ ܟ
ܟ[2]ܐܦܟܢ ,ܡܙܒܢ ܐܝܟ ܟ ܟܠܢ ܟܝܢ ܠܚ ܟ
ܐ ܟܝܐܚ ܟܚܒ[3]ܟ . ܗ ܚܒܟ ܟ ܚ[4]ܐ ,ܡ ܟܒܚ ܟ
ܗ[5]ܒ ,ܡܠܟ . ܟ ܟ ܟ[6]ܐ ܟ ܟ[7]ܐ ܟ
ܟ[8]ܐ ܟ . ܟ[9]ܐ . ܟ[10]ܒ ܟ . {17.88}
ܟ[11]ܐ ܟ . {17.89} ܟ[12]ܐ ܟ
{17.90} ܟ[13]ܐ {17.91} {17.92}
18b {17.93} . ܟ[14]ܐ | ܟ
ܟ[15]ܐ .
{17.94} ܟ[16]ܐ ܟ[17]ܐ
ܟ[18]ܐ . ܟ[19]ܐ ,ܡ[20]ܐ
ܟ[21]ܐ .
{17.100} ܟ[22]ܐ {17.101}
ܟ[23]ܐ {17.102} . {17.103} .
ܟ[24]ܐ {17.104} . {17.105} .
{17.107} . ܟ[25]ܐ .

[1] ⁻ < S (hom) [2] f < S [3] < S [4] < S [5] ܒ S [6] < S [7] + ܐ S [8] < S [9] ܟ R [10] f ܒ R
[11] ܟ S [12] i < R [13] ܟ S [14] i ܐ S [15] ⁻ < S (hom) [16] < S [17] i ܐ S [18] ܟ S
[19] + ܐ R [20] i ܐ S [21] i ܒ S [22] i + ܐ S [23] i ܐ S [24] lege ܟ S [25] ⁻ < S (hom)

in the world,[83] and especially among the sons | of the church, who 18a
corrupted the way of God and did not keep His commandments which were commanded by Our Lord Jesus Christ who said: 'do not swear at all, not by heaven, which is the throne of God, nor by the earth which is the footstool beneath His feet, nor swear by your head, on which you could not make one hair, either black or white'.[84] And now they do not resemble Christians, when they deny God and forswear His Christ, without being forced.[85] {17.88} They feared and served created things, more than the Creator of these to whom are due all praises and blessings for ever and ever, Amen.[86] {17.89} Because of this, God has delivered them up to all tortures, on account of the wickedness of their deeds, {17.90} for they are deceivers, lovers of themselves, hypocrites, lovers of their belly and lovers of vainglory of this world more than lovers of God.[87] {17.91} And because of this, He delivered them to the chastisement of the Sons of Ishmael, the wicked ones, {17.92} the reckless ones | who are sent all over the whole world. {17.93} And 18b
know that when all these things have come to pass, the world has come to an end and the end of times has arrived.

{17.94} Then a king dressed in green clothes will come from the East and through him there will be great peace and quiet in the world. Churches will be built and monasteries will be restored. He is the last one whom the world expects to come at the end of the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael.

{17.100} Then the Romans will come {17.101} and they will rule on the whole earth for a week and a half. And there will be great peace in their days, {17.102} for this is the last peace, of which Our Lord has spoken.[88] {17.103} And then the four winds of heaven will be stirred up[89] and kingdoms will stand up against each other.[90] {17.104} And the Turks will come, who have the likeness of wolves. {17.105} And then the Daylamis will go out, who are wolves, and they will destroy each other. {17.107} Then the gates of the North will be opened and the people of

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[83] Cf. Deut. 9:4–6.
[84] * Matt. 5:34–36.
[85] Cf. The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius ch. 12; Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 33 (t), vol. 2, pp. 54–55 (tr).
[86] Rom 1:25–26.
[87] Cf. 2 Tim 3:4.
[88] Cf. 1 Thess 5:3.
[89] Cf. Dan 7:2.
[90] Cf. Matt 24:7, Luke 21:10.

ביאתה {17.108} כלה אחרו לפתחנו לבלתי לבל אחרו נפקנו
19a מלמנו | כשהיה ליהודי אחד שיש לו שני בתים אחד של אבן ואחד של
עשוי קש . [1]ולבתים שהיו עשויין לפתחו של אבן היה מקום קטן
כשיעור פתח גדול {17.109} . כלו שני בתים של אדם אחד נפלו על
של בלי אחד של עצים . וכנגד זה [2]כתיב ויהי כל העם אשר
אתנו אשר בלעם קללו ברכה {17.110}. אמרו לו
שמא נפלעת [5]בדבר אשר אנו [4]עתידין [3]לעשות לך אמר
להן אין {17.114} אנו אף על פי שאנחנו
כשלנו אלהים בדבר {17.117} . מתוך שהיה שמח של חמשה
בדבר {17.118} . אמרו שמא נלכד אלהים {17.115} אשתו אלמן
ליהודה . אלהים אנו אנשי {17.119}. לו לו אלהים אלהים
בראשיתם בתחלה אנו אנשי . אלהים מתוך שהיה חמשה
אלף אנו אנשי . אלהי אם שמי אמרת . [6]אמרו אנו יחדו
19b אלפים אלף לו | כי אנו אחיכם בחלם . אחרי כי אלהים אמרתם
לו אנשי אחיכם אנחנו לבלתי אנחנו אשר אתו אנחנו אשר
ביום {17.120} אשר .
אמרתם לו אשר . [8]אלה אנשי מלחמתי [7]אלו אשר
אשתו אנשי כי אשתו אמר אתו אלהים . אשר אשר אתו
. אנשי כי אלנו [9]אמר חמשה אנשים . בתוך אשר אתנו
{17.122} [14]אלהי אלהי ,אמר [13]אשרבאתיהם [12]כי [11]אחרי [10]אלהים
אנשי בלי לו אשתו אחרי לבלתי ,אמרו [15]אלפים אמרתם ל
. [17]אמר אחרי אלף אלף אלהים לו אשתו [16]אשר אמרו אשר

[1] ~ (312) RS [2] < RS [3] על S [4] אנחנו S [5] < R [6] אלהים S [7] אלף S
[8] אלה S [9] < S [10] lege f + י RS [11] lege f + י RS [12] + ,אמרו אלהי R [13] i + ר R
[14] + יי אלף S [15] אלפים S [16] + אלהי בתוך S [17] + אחרי S

Gog and Magog will go out, who resemble dogs,[91] {17.108} and they will do all that is evil in this world. They eat the reptiles of the earth and they eat the people | and kill the children and give |them| to their 19a
mothers to boil and to eat.[92] And they pity neither the old people nor the infants. {17.109} Then the great evil dragon will come, who is the Son of Perdition[93] and he creeps on the earth and swallows all without pity. {17.110} Then God will send the angel of wrath and he gathers them to one place and destroys them in one hour. And they will burn and dissolve like wax before fire.

{17.114} Then Elijah, man of fire, will appear and he will destroy the dragon with the breath of his mouth.[94] {17.117} Then the cross will be raised up and made to ascend to heaven {17.115} and the king will surrender himself to God. {17.118} Then death shall rule over all.

{17.119} And the first horn will sound and all the people will sleep the sleep of death. And the second horn will sound and all the ones buried will wake up and stand up as if from sleep. And the third horn will sound and the angels will descend from heaven, and then they will choose the tares | from among the grains of wheat. The grains of wheat 19b
will be collected in the stores of the house of the Father, in the heavenly habitations. And the tares will be thrown into an unquenchable fire, {17.120} on the day of the revelation of our Lord.[95]

{17.121} In sum: his coming is full of fright. And the earth will be stirred up upon its inhabitants. In every place where there is dust from the remains of people, it will swiftly come to life.[96] And the command will swiftly resurrect all the people from the dust.

{17.122} And we ask and beseech Our Lord Jesus Christ that on that hour He will deem us worthy, by His grace, of the intimacy with His chosen ones, to chant praise continuously, here in life and there in life, with that infinite delight forever and ever. Amen.'

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[91] Cf. Rev 20:8; see also WS, p. 369, n. 90.

[92] Cf. Pseudo-Methodius, ch. 13; Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 42 (t), vol. 2, p. 68 (tr) and n. 8.

[93] Cf. 2 Thess 2:3.

[94] Cf. 2 Thess 2:8. For Elijah's return at the end of times, see: Matt 17:11. The term 'man of fire' refers to the Christian extra-biblical story of Elijah's birth, when he was wrapped in fire (Kohn, 'Der Prophet Elia in der Legende', p. 294.) See for example: Budge, *The Book of the Bee*, p. 75 (t), p. 70 (tr).

[95] Cf. Matt 13:30.

[96] Cf. 1 Cor 15:52.

{19} אמר רבי יוחנן משום[1] רבי שמעון בן יוצדק, רבי אלעזר בשם רבי יוסי בן זמרא. אמר רבי יוחנן, רבי מאיר היה מפרש בשם רבי יוסי בן זמרא. משנה היתה שלמדנו מאיר היה לה שבעה נוסחים. כשהיה רבי מת ורבי יהודה ורבי שמעון היו יושבים ודורשים, ושלחו אחריהם חכמי 20a הדור, ומפקירי הדור שבעירם | שהיו מכירים, ושלחו אחריהם חכמי הדור, ומפקירי הדור שבעירם. לפני מי נשלח? לפני מי שיש בידו לדרוש כדרשתו של מאיר. כיון שהגיעו לשם לא מצאו אלא אחד שהיה יושב ודורש כדרשתו של מאיר. אמרו לו: מי הוא שיש בידו לדרוש כדרשתו של מאיר? אמר להם: אם חכמים אתם, אל תשגרו אחריו. שמא אין אתם יכולים לעמוד בדרשתו

{19} The account of Mar Sergius, called Baḥīrā, written by the monk Mar Yahb, has come to an end. Now I, Mar Yahb, composed it after the death of Mar Sergius, after I had learned everything from his own mouth. And when I departed, after his death, and came to Bēt Aramāyē and undertook a careful investigation about him, | I found 20a
out that he was originally from the region of Bēt Garmai, from a village called Shushan.[97] He was priest in rank and he was well versed in the holy books. And wherever he stayed, in a church or in a monastery or the shrine of a martyr, he used to secretly get up at night and break all the crosses. He would not leave any except one single one, not because he hated crosses—he honored crosses more than all people—but he used to say: 'we ought to bow in worship to one cross and not to many. This is why it is proper for us to honor one: because also Christ was crucified on one and not on many'. And because of this he was banished from the church and he fled to |the Sons of| Ishmael.

{20} Further, the tradition which Kaʿb the Scribe—cursed be his memory, Amen—passed on to the Ishmaelites. He confounded and corrupted everything that Sergius had written originally.[98] For the Sons of Ishmael were uncivilized pagans, like horses | without a bridle. They 20b
bowed in worship to the idol of al-Kabar, who is Iblīs.[99] The names of the demons are these: Bahram, god of the Persians, [Anahid], goddess of the Arameans, and ʿUdi of the Hittites: these are the sons of Hormizd.[100] And Awkbar of the Ishmaelites, Baal of the Babylonians, and Artemis, goddess of the Ephesians; these are the Sons of the

[97] Susa, in the province of Elam, according to the Book of Daniel (Dan 8:2). (WS has instead *Tshn* in Bēt Qudshāyē) A certain Sergius of Bēt Garmai, writer of a history of the holy men in his region, is mentioned by Thomas of Marga. Whether the redactor has wanted to allude to this specific man is uncertain. Budge, *Thomas of Marga. The book of governors*, vol. 1, pp. 60–61 (t), vol. 2, pp. 109–110 (tr).

[98] For the alleged interference of this Jew, Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, in the monk's teaching to Muḥammad, see {9} on p. 269 above and also pp. 159–160.

[99] Al-Kabar is probably the same as Awkbar, mentioned several times below. See the explanation in n. 104 below.

[100] The second name given is probably Anahid; it is spelled as Ayhād but is given correctly further below; ʿUdi is not known as a Hittite god; perhaps it is an invention that serves only to extend this list of pagans peoples and demons further.

ܡܫܝܚܐ [1]ܗܘ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ . ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܢܬ ܥܡ ܟܠ ܚܛܝܐ ܡܬܟܠܡ ܐܢܬ ܒܦܬܓܡܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܐܢܬ ܡܢ ܦܘܡ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܒܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܐܢܬ ܡܢ ܦܘܡ ܕܐܠܗܐ [2]ܘܐܡܠܠ ܠܟ ܡܢ ܕܒܪ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܬܟܠܡ ܥܡ ܟܠ ܚܛܝܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܡܬܟܠܡ ܥܡ ܟܠ ܚܛܝܐ ܒܦܬܓܡܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܐܢܐ [4]ܐܡܪ ܠܟ [3]ܐܠܐ . ܡܫܬܬܩ ܡܢܟ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ . ܐܢܬ ܐܡܪ ܬܪ ܢܫܡܥ ,ܐܠܐ ܒܝܫ . ܡܫܬܬܩ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ
21a | [6]ܐܡܪ [5]ܡܫܬܝܢ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ . ܡܢܐ ܕܐ ܠܟ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܡܪ

South.[101] And they attribute the names of the demons to the stars and bow in worship to them until this day.

When the false worship of the demons was established everywhere, they worshipped Awkbar and the Stone and the well that is called Zamzam and the grave of Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt.[102] And in their days there was division and false worship of demons among the people. About Hormizd and Ahriman they say that Hormizd gave birth to light and Ahriman to darkness, and Hormizd gave birth to good and Ahriman to evil. Bahram, ʿUdi and Anahid, the children of Hormizd: their names are on high, in heaven. Baal, Awkbar and Artemis, the children of Ahriman: | their names are down 21a
on the earth. And the Sons of Ishmael, lo, they provoke the anger of God every day of their lives with their polytheistic worship of Awkbar, without being aware of it.[103] And the name of Awkbar is proclaimed by them shamelessly with a loud voice, and lo, they sacrifice to him year after year, until our day.[104]

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[101] 'Sons of the South' is a frequently used designation for Muslims in Christian apocalyptic texts in Syriac and Arabic, inspired on the Book of Daniel's mention of the King of the South (Dan 11). This is the only instance of it in the Legend. For discussions of the apocalyptic connotations of the term, see: Holmberg, 'Ahl/farīq at-tayman—ein rätselvolles Epitheton' and Roggema, 'Biblical exegesis and interreligious polemics'.

[102] Muslim sanctuaries and astrology are associated here with the demon worship of pagans; 'Zamzam' is the sacred spring of Mecca and 'the Stone' is the Black Stone in the Kaʿba. The insinuation that Muslims worship Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who challenged Moses (2 Tim 3:8), is also to be found in the Arabic *Apocalypse of Peter* ('Book of the Rolls'): Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter', p. 205 (t) p. 276 (tr).

[103] The term translated as 'polytheistic worship' is *šawtāpūtā ʿam*, 'associating with', which is the Syriac translation of the Islamic term *shirk*, 'associating created beings with the Divine' (see for example: Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 3 (t), vol. 2, p. 3 (tr)). Clearly, this whole passage is an attempt to silence the Muslim accusation that Christians are 'associators' (*mushrikūn*), while they themselves are pure monotheists.

[104] This passage follows traditional patterns of Syriac polemic against Zoroastrianism (see for example the texts in Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages hellénisés*, vol. 2, pp. 94–117), but includes the supposed demon worship of the Muslims. The mention of al-Kabar and Awkbar reflects the allegation made by many Eastern Christian polemicists that Muslims invoke two Gods, rather than the One God, when they say 'Allāhu Akbar'. Their claim is that these words in reality mean 'Allāh wa-Akbar', i.e. Allah *and* Akbar, and that the Muezzin, when calling for prayer, is inadvertently committing an act of *shirk*. The 'sacrifice to him year after year' must refer to the annual feast of ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā during the Ḥajj. Whether the name of this supposed god of the Arabs, goes back to the pre-Islamic cult of Venus remains speculative (see: Rotter, 'Der *veneris dies* im Vorislamischen Mekka' and Roggema, 'Muslims as Crypto-Idolaters', pp. 6–11).

{21} ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܬܫܬܘܩ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܟܠ
ܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܡ ܫܠܡܐ ܡܫܬܘܠܚܢ ܒܝܕܝ ܠܟ ܕܬܕ
ܡܢ ܡܝܬ ,ܬܠܡܝܕܝ ܘܐܡ ܐܠܝܦܐ ܬܫܬܘܩ ܥܡܐ ܐܒܕܝ ܒܝܬܝ ܟܠ ܕܢܘܡ
ܥܡܗ ܒܫܡܝܐ . ܟܬܒ ܒܫܡ ܦܘ ܕ ܟܠܗ ܡܝܬܝ . ܟܬܒ ܐܦ
ܒܝܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ ,ܡܛܠ ܐܬܝܗܒ ܬܫܬܘܩ ܐܒܗܬ ܢܒܝ . ܐܠܐ
. ܡܛܠ ܟܕ ܥܡܠ ܥܡܝܬܝ ܐܦܣܛܘܠ ܬܫܬܘܩ ܒܟ ܢܒ . ܟܕ ܒܐܝܬ
21b . ܟܒ ܢ ܟܬܒ | ,ܡܛܠ ܟܕ ܟܬܒ ,ܟܬܒ ,ܟܠ ܒܝܬ ,ܡܠܝ
. ܟܬܒ ܦܠ ܒܫܡ ܟܬܒ ܟܬܒ ܒܝ ܕ ܟܬܒ ܟܒ ܟܬܒ ܟܬ
ܟܬܒ ܥܡܠ ܟܬܒ ܟܬ ܦܠ ܟܬ . ܡܝܬ ܟܬ ܒܐ
ܟܒ ܡܝܬ ܠ ܬܝܒ ܟܠ ܟܒ . ܟܬܒ ܡܛܒ ܟܝ ܠ
ܬܫܬܘܩ ܟܬܒ ܟܬ ܟܬܒ ܟܬ ܟܬ . ܟܬܒ ܡܛܒ ܟܝ ܠ
ܟܒ ܡܝܬ ܠ ܬܝܒ ܟܠ ܟܒ . ܟܬܒ ܡܛܒ ܟܝ ܠ
ܟܬ ܟܬ ,ܡ ܟܬܒ ܟܬ ܟ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ
. ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ

{22} ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ
ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ,ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟ
22a | ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟ

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1 ܠܐ ܟܬ S 2 ܟ S 3 i + ܟ S 4 ] ܟܬ S 5 i ܟ RS 6 ܟ S 7 i < R 8 i < S 9 lege
i + ܢ 10 lege ܟܬ RS 11 f + ܟ S 12 < S 13 ܟ S 14 ܟ S 15 < R 16 f < S 17 <
S 18 < S 19 ] ܟ S 20 < S 21 < S 22 ܟ RS 23 i < S 24 < S 25 + ܟ R
26 < R

{21} Further, the affair of Muḥammad's death: If a person asks some of them about his grave they do not know it, because they adhere to the tradition which, as they say, Kaʿb the Jewish scribe handed down to them, who said to them that Muḥammad is the Paraclete, whom Christ has promised, and |that| after him no other prophet would rise,[105] because he is the Seal of the Prophets. And because of this, Muḥammad, about whom Sergius Baḥīrā prophesied and afterwards Kaʿb, is held in great honor. When Muḥammad died he was highly esteemed in the eyes of all of his people. They embalmed him with myrrh and aloe and they put him on a bier and brought him | to a 21b
big house and closed the door. And they sealed the door of that house, saying that on the third day he would go up to heaven, to Christ, who sent him. And after three days they all came together and opened the door of the house to see what had happened to the Prophet of God, and they could not enter due to the smell of the body of the Prophet.[106] And it is not necessary to explain anything about his grave that the listeners do not comprehend. And lo, until this day they hold on to this tradition that Muḥammad is the Paraclete who would come after Christ. My brothers, let me leave all the confusion and error and the rest of the words of this writing of Kaʿb the Scribe for what it is! Kaʿb then died, and he was buried in the shroud of Muḥammad and his prophecy was not fulfilled.

{22} Further, the affair of the Qurʾan, which Sergius handed down to them for them to study. After the death of Sergius, Kaʿb the Scribe rose up and he changed the writing of Sergius Baḥīrā and he handed down another teaching to them. And he put in it | confusion, corruption, 22a

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105 Litt: 'has risen'.

106 This polemical tale about the failed prophecy of Muḥammad's resurrection must have been popular very early on among Christians, as it already reached Spain in the ninth century. It is part of the anonymous *Istoria de Mahomet* and was copied in the mid-ninth century by Eulogius of Cordoba. See Wolf, 'The Earliest Latin Lives', pp. 97–99 (ttr), Sancti Eulogii 'Liber Apologeticus Martyrum', p. 860. When Pseudo-al-Kindī mentions the failed resurrection he insinuates that it was the cause of the Ridda, 'apostasy', after the Prophet's death; Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 64–65; Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 166–167 (tr). Ultimately, this polemical tale could go back to the reports about ʿUmar, who refused to believe that Muḥammad was dead, convinced that his spirit has temporarily been raised to heaven; see Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad*, p. 359.

ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܠܡܐ [1]ܫܡܐ ܫܠܡ ܩܕܡ ܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܡܐ ܡܪܝ ܫܡܐ ܕܐܒ ܫܡ ܡܪܝ ܫܡ ܕܐܒ ܡܪܝ ܫܡ ܕܐܒ ܡܪܝ ܫܡ ܕܐܒ

superstitions, ridiculous and arbitrary things, circumcision,[107] ablution, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' and 'a killing for a killing' and divorce, and that when a woman is repudiated, if another man does not take her, he cannot return to her.[108] He gave them this name and one order of demons that lives down on the earth and that they call 'Jinni', and all that they adhere to from the teaching of Kaʿb. Sergius gave them the New and Kaʿb the Old |Testament|. Sergius gave them the sounding-board and Kaʿb the announcer with a loud voice. Sergius explained and handed down to them twenty-four kings, and Kaʿb thirty six, for he said 'I saw three kingdoms from a great sea, which Muḥammad will lead, wearing a green robe, and there were twelve allotted to each one of them. The first is of the Sons of Ishmael, the second of Sons of Muḥammad, and the third of the Sons of Fāṭima', and everything |else| they adhere to and devote themselves to, until a man stood up whose name is al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, who was governor of the whole land of Bēt Aramāyē.[109] He built a great city

[107] The issue of circumcision appears in many Christian refutations on Islam, in the context of the Muslim accusation that Christians abandoned the religion of Christ by introducing new rites, such as praying to the East and baptism. The Emperor Leo III, in his letter to the Caliph ʿUmar II, defends baptism as having existed already in Old-Testament times and refutes the Muslim charge of replacing circumcision by baptism by pointing out that, in fact, Muslim circumcision was an innovation that differs from the pristine Abrahamic rite. Leo claims that Muslim rituals clearly diverge from the commandments of the Old Law, because they also circumcise women and do not adhere to the commandment of performing it on the eighth day after birth; Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', pp. 316–317 (tr); see also Sahas, *John of Damascus*, 140–141 (ttr).

[108] According to the Qurʾan a woman who has been repudiated has to wait for a certain period of time (three *qurūʾ*) before she is free to marry someone else (Q 2:228). But her husband can also take her back after that period of waiting. If he then repudiates her again another waiting period starts and in this way a women could end up in a permanent state of uncertainty about her marital status. That is why, in case of a third repudiation, a woman will have to marry someone else before her former husband is allowed to take her back (Q 2:229–230). For the backgrounds of this law, see: Schacht [-Layish], 'Ṭalāḳ'. Amongst the Christian authors who express their indignation about these regulations are the Emperor Leo III and John of Damascus; Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', pp. 325–326 (tr); Sahas, *John of Damascus*, pp. 138–139 (ttr); and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, pp. 80–81 (ttr). See also above: Ch. 6, pp. 193–194.

[109] Umayyad governor in Iraq, d. 714.

ܐܒܗܝ ܐܡܪ ܫܬܝܢܝܢ ܡܫܬܪ ܠܗ ܡܝܬܐ [1]ܡܚܠ ܐܢ ܒܪܡ
ܠܡܐ ܐܡܪܬ ܐܢ . ܠܡܐ ܡܩܒܠ ܠܡܐ ܟܬܒ ܠܡܐ ܠ
ܡܢ ܫܥܐ ܒܪ ܒܟ ܒܗ ܡܚܘܫ ܡܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܒܝܢ
ܡܠܐ ܒܗ ܠܗ ܕ ܐܡܪ ܡܫܬܚ ܡܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܡܪ ܡܢ
ܣܒܠ ܫܒܝ ܠܡ ܒܪ ܒܪܟ ܠܗ . ܒ ܒܗ ܡܫܐ
ܡܢ ,ܡܐܒܗ ܡܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ,ܐܒܗ ܡ ܐ ,ܐܒܗ ܡ
ܒܪ ܡܝܬ ܒܢ ܒܢ ܠܡܫܬܚ ܒܢ ܐܡܪ . ܡܢ ܠ
ܡܩܒܠ ܠܡܐ ܐܒܗ ܫܡ ܡܚܘ ܠ ܐ . ܡܚܘ ܠ
23a . ܡܚ | ܡܚܘ ܠ ܡ ܡܚ ܡ ܐ ܠ ܡ ܐ ܠ ܐ ܠ
ܡ ܐ ܡ ܡ ܐ . ܡ ܡ ܡ ܠ ܡ ܡ ܠ ܡ

[1] lege? ܡܚܘ

there and called it Wāsiṭ because he built it in the middle of that land: therefore it is called 'Wāsiṭ'.[110]

Then he summoned [Kufa] and Basra and all the cities in its territory, and they collected and brought their books and their learned men to him. And when all of them examined the Qurʾan, they found all of it to be full of error. And there was nothing of use in it—it was all corrupted and confused and laughable and absurd. Not the slightest fear of God was to be found in it, because all that Sergius had handed down to them had been changed by Kaʿb the Jew. Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf was opposed to changing the book, which was all confused.[111] And they collected their books and he burnt them before the eyes of all the people in the centre of the city of Wāsiṭ. He sent for all the Christian teachers and priests, and they gathered them and they explained the text of our Old | and New |Testament|; from the Gospel and the Torah and the 23a
Prophets.[112] And every word which pleased him and which everyone

[110] The name Wāsiṭ is indeed related to the Arabic word for 'middle', *wasaṭ*; the city was centrally located in the Sawād between the important cities of Kufa, Basra, al-Madāʾin and al-Ahwāz. The mention of the location of al-Ḥajjāj's initiative is undoubtedly a pun, which underlines the fact that no one can deny the fact that the text of the Qurʾan was altered, since it happened under the eyes of all people in the middle of the city called 'Middle'.

[111] *Etqrī* is translated here as 'was opposed to' (cf. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, p. 691: 'restitit, adversatus est'); one would expect the verb in *peal*, meaning 'to summon', although, on the basis of the continuation of this passage, one may conclude that al-Ḥajjāj wanted to discard all the old copies and start over, rather than changing the existing ones.

[112] *ṣurtā* is translated as 'text', in its original meaning of 'Bible text' rather than 'chapter of the Qurʾan' as one finds it in the following lines.

,מוסיף שלום לא יפחד מפחד פתאם ומשואת רשעים כי תבוא .מבטחך
יהוה יהיה בכסלך ושמר רגלך מלכוד .טוב עשות חסד ומשפט נעשה
ליהוה מזבח לשמו . ברוך מגדיל ישועות מלכו ועשה חסד .יהוה
יהוה לבדו תנחנו ואין עמו אל נכר .ומגדלותיו ישראל משיחו
יהוה חסדו יהוה ברוך יהוה צדקו יהוה לבבו יהוה מעוזו יהוה
לעולם יהוה כסאו יהוה בנה בלי יהוה בחכם יהוה ישם
שלמה . ומשמחה בדגנו ל ישלח יהו שלום ישמיעם ישמרכם
. ישועתו קצפו

ל [1]יהוה ישמחכם משלוחיהם . ישלח משחתם ושחתם
,מוסיפו שום שלח שלח לבו ישבעה שלו שכיחיהם [2]שלוחיהם
. שחת ישלחנו שלח ישלח

[3]יושב שכיחו ישמיעו שלחו[ו]

[1] i < R [2] שלחיהם R [3] ו < R

liked, he noted down in it, and he copied and quoted from the books and called it 'Qur'an'.[113]

He wanted it to have sections, like some sort of stories. They have the following names: the first is Sūrat al-Baqara, which is honored more by them than any other of their tales.[114] And after that: Sūrat ʿImrān, Sūrat Yūsuf, Sūrat Maryam, Sūrat ʿĪsā, Sūrat Ya-Sīn, Sūrat Ha-Mīm, Sūrat Alif-Mīm, Sūrat Mūsā, Sūrat Aaron, and many more of which we do not need to give the names.[115] These suffice for the keen-witted.

Praise be to the wisdom of God and His stupendous economy of the ineffable and unfathomable mysteries. Glory to Him. May His mercy and love rest on the whole world, on us and on you. Amen.

The account of Sergius Baḥīrā has come to an end.

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[113] Similar to Muslims accusing the People of the Book of having tampered with their Scriptures, Christian apologists believed in the *taḥrīf* of the Qur'an. Whereas many drew attention to the redaction processes under the Rāshidūn, several Christian texts focus on al-Ḥajjāj's interventions in the text and his destruction of divergent copies. His initiatives regarding the standardization of the Qur'anic text are, in fact, known from Muslim sources (see the detailed study of Hamdan, *Studien zur Kanonisierung*, pp. 135–169 and the references in Mingana, 'An ancient Syriac translation', pp. 202–203 and Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', p. 298, n. 48). The Emperor Leo III is his letter to ʿUmar II insinuates that al-Ḥajjāj, as fierce supporter of the Umayyad Caliph, attempted to destroy texts from (or perhaps about) ʿAlī (Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text', pp. 297–298 (tr)), similarly Pseudo-al-Kindī, who mentions the Emir's interventions as one of many during the first century of Islam: Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 82–83 (t); Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 190–191 (tr). In the *Debate of Abraham of Tiberias* al-Ḥajjāj is the one who 'compiled and standardized' (*allafahu wa-rattabahu*) the Qur'an: Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 330–331 (ttr).

[114] I.e. 'the Chapter of the Cow', the second chapter of the Qur'an, to which the story of the cow of {16.14} alludes.

[115] The real Qur'anic chapters are: Sūrat ʿImrān (Q 3), Sūrat Yūsuf (Q 12), Sūrat Maryam (Q 19), Sūrat Yā-Sīn (Q 36). The names Sūrat ʿĪsā, Sūrat Alif-Mīm, Sūrat Mūsā and Sūrat Aaron are inventions. Sūrat Ḥā-Mīm does not exist either, but seven chapters of the Qur'an do begin with these two 'mysterious' letters. For the issue of the secret letters in Christian 'exegesis' of the Qur'an, see Ch. 5, p. 131.

CHAPTER TEN

# THE WEST-SYRIAN RECENSION

{٥} *حدّثنا[1] أبو سعيد الأعرابي قال حدّثنا[2] أبو حاتم[3] السجستاني
قال حدّثنا[4] الأصمعي[5] *وغيره[6] واختلفا* قال[7] وحدّثني[8] بعض
شيوخ[9] البصريين[10] أنهم كانوا يجدون في كتب الأولين[11] .[12]

وكان[13] الحسن لا يجيز شهادة من لا يحسن[14] الكتابة[15] وكان الشعبي
يقول الكتابة[16] تزيد الحليم حلماً وتزيد الكريم كرماً وتزيد الشريف
شرفاً، ولو لم يكن فيها إلا أن الرجل[17] يستحي أن يسأل عن حاجته
وهو يقدر على أن يكتب فيقضيها لكان فيها غنى. وقال[18] الشعبي
أيضاً[19] الكتابة في القراطيس أحد الجمالين[20] وقال[21] الشعبي[22]
أيضاً[23] الكتابة* في[24] القراطيس[25] تضاعف[26] الحسنات وتمحو
السيئات[27] وقال[28] الشعبي | الكتابة في القراطيس[29] [30]تذكر[31] العلم
وتشد[32] أواخيه[33] وقال[34] أيضاً لا يزال الرجل عالماً ما دام يتعلم .
وقال الشعبي أيضاً الكتابة في القراطيس تذكر العلم وتشد أواخيه

48b

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[1] < C [2] f ـل C, * < F [3] وابو حاتم D [4] f و D [5] + وهو D [6] lege? وغيره D [7] lege? + syāmē CD, * واختلفا وحدثني وابو عبيد F [8] lege? i < D [9] f < CD [10] البصريون C [11] في كتب الاولين C, (وبقيا وجد) الاول D. Two words have been erased in B; the last word seems to read في; B probably had the same reading as C, but the scribe may have wanted to avoid the suggestion that they referred to Muḥammad rather than to Baḥīrā. [12] < DF [13] وكان C [14] الخط الحسن F [15] ¬ والكتابة CD [16] lege? + syāmē [17] f < C [18] + ايضا في F [19] والكتابة CD [20] f و CD [21] في CD [22] ¬ الشعبي C [23] i + و D [24] * البصريون CF (البصرة) [25] والقراطيس D [26] + وتكتب F [27] والسيئات CD [28] lege < DF [29] i < C [30] < C [31] الاول D [32] < F [33] ¬ له F [34] + syāmē D

{o} Next, by the power of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, my hope, we write the account of Rabban Sergius, who is called [in the Saracen language 'Baḥīrā', while the Syrians call him 'the Hater of the Cross'],[1] the monk who stayed at Mount Sinai, and how he taught Muḥammad. Amen.

My friends, this Rabban Sergius told me, the monk Ishoʿyahb,[2] about his illness[3] and about his visit to the holy Mount Sinai and about the kingdom[s] of the Sons of Ishmael, one after the other until the end—they showed themselves to Sergius in the form of twelve beasts, that differed from each other[4]—and above all about the faith of the Sons of Hagar and about the conversations that took place between Sergius and Muḥammad, the prophet of the Saracens, and about the questions and answers of Muḥammad with Sergius, and about Rabban Sergius going into the desert of Yathrib,[5] to the Sons of Ishmael, and about how he was persecuted by the bishops of his time and, as they say, because he hated the cross, he was banished from the church, because he said that | only one cross should be placed in the church and that 48b
we should worship only one, since Christ too was crucified on a single cross, and not on many. Furthermore he said: 'It is not proper for us to worship a cross of stone, silver, gold, copper or of any other material

[1] This is the (presumably corrective) reading according to D; the manuscript gives the illogical reading 'who is called 'the Saracen' and 'Baḥīrā' and 'the Syrian' and they call him 'the Hater of the Cross' '. The introduction to this recension is somewhat desultory and it appears to have been added to an earlier recension; see also below n. o.

[2] This is the only recension to call the narrator by this name, which cannot be the original one, since ES has the name Mar Yahb, which is reflected in the names used in the Arabic recensions as well as in the Latin recension.

[3] Syriac: *kūrhānā*, also used metaphorically for 'misfortune', which could have been meant here as well.

[4] This refers to the apocalyptic vision, the first beast of which represents twelve kings. However, there are no twelve beasts in this vision.

[5] Yathrib is the original name of the city of Medina and its surroundings.

ܡܫܬܚ ܠ ܟܬܒ ²ܡܕܡ ¹ܠ ܟܕ ܢܫܠܚ ܟܬܒ ܒܝܕ ܠܐ ܟܕ ܡܫܬܚ
. ܟܬܒ ;ܐܚܪ ³ܫܩܠ ܟܬܒ ܕܡ ܒܝܬܐ ܠܡ ܡܪܒܐ

⁶ܡ ܐܪ ܠܡ ܟܝ ܠܐ ܟܬܒ ⁵ܟܐܦܣܩܐ ܕ ܓܪܝܒܐ ⁴ܐܚ
. ܟܠܝܟܬܒܐ ܠܡܒܠ ܒܝܒ ܟܝܬܒ ⁸ܐܝܟ ⁷ܟܐ

ܠܡܒܚ ܡ ܟܡ . ¹⁰ܡܒܠܥ ⁹ܟܡ ܟܡ
ܡܒܝܢ ܐܒ ⁿ ¹¹;ܢܡ ܟܡ ܒܥܝܒ ,ܐ
¹⁴ܟܝ ¹³ܐܢ ¹²ܡܒܝ ¹⁴ܟ ¹³ܐ
¹⁶ܒܡ . ¹⁵ܟ ¹⁶ܒ ¹⁷ܡܒ ¹⁸ܡ . ¹⁹ܟ
ܒܥܝ ,ܐ ²⁰ܡ ²¹ܟ ²²,ܐ ²³ܟ ²⁴ ²⁵,ܐ ²⁶ܡ ²⁶ܡ
ܟ ²⁷ܠ ²⁸ ²⁹,ܐ ³⁰ܟ ³¹ ³²,ܐ ³³ ³⁴ ³⁵ .

[1]lege f ⁊ CD, (< F) [2]< C [3]ܫܩܠ D [4]i < C [5]ܟܐܦܣܩܐ D [6]ˀ ܡܠܥ C [7]ܟ CD [8]< C [9]< C [10]ܟܠܥ C [11]ܢ C [12]i + ⁿ CD [13]i < C [14]ˀ ܟܬܒ ܟܝܬ C, ܟܝܬ ܟܬܒ ܟܬܒ D, ⁊ܟܠܡ ܟܬܒ ⁊ ܟܠ ܟܬܒ F [15]ܟ C [16]+ ⁿ CD [17]ˀ + syāmē C [18]< C [19]ܟ CDF [20]+ ⁿ F [21]f , D [22]ܐ ,ܐ C, ⁿ ⁊ ⁊ D [23]ˀ F [24]i + ⁿ C, + ⁊ F [25]< C [26]ˀ < D [27]i < CF [28]ˀ < F [29]< C [30]ܟ CDF [31]lege ⁊ CD, ⁊ F [32]ⁿ CD [33]< D [34]ⁿ C [35]ˀ ,ⁿ C, ⁿ ⁊ F

except wood, lest the matter would resemble to us the idols which the pagan peoples, the idolaters, make.'[6]

And after he was persecuted by the bishops and priests on account of these words, Rabban Sergius Baḥīrā left and went to the desert of Yathrib, to the Ishmaelites. He stayed with them in peace and quiet, and he enjoyed affection and intimacy with them, with the help of Father Mar Sabrishoʿ, the monk who worked many great miracles and for whom Nuʿmān the King, ruler of the Arabs, sent, because of a certain illness of which Nuʿmān suffered.[7] He was tormented by an evil demoniacal spirit, like Saul in the days of the Prophet David. This King Nuʿmān lived in the ancient city of the Ishmaelites, which is called 'Arabia', which was theirs in the days of Chosroes, King of the Persians.[8] And through the guidance of the true pastors of the rational flock of Christ, Mar Sabrishoʿ, Catholicos of the East and Mar Ishoʿzekhāyā the monk, Nuʿmān | was cured of the evil demoniacal 49a
spirit that had been vexing and tormenting him severely.

Because the monks were few at the time and only present in some places and regions, Nuʿmān and the entire city of Arabia received the sign of baptism at the hands of Mar Sabrishoʿ Catholicos of the East, since before they were baptized they worshipped the star al-ʿUzzā, who is Aphrodite Venus, about whom even these days they say the following, when they swear 'No, |by| the Father of al-ʿUzzā!'. I said to them:

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[6] The issue of the material of which crosses were made in connection to the question of idolatry, is discussed in Ch. 4 above, pp. 103–104.

[7] Accounts of the healing and conversion of al-Nuʿmān III, the last king of the Lakhmid kingdom of al-Ḥīra, are to be found in several Syriac and Arabic sources. This Sabrishoʿ is the Nestorian Patriarch Sabrishoʿ I (596–604), whose *Vita* was written by a monk called Peter, which has been edited by Bedjan in *Histoire de Mar-Yabalaha*, pp. 288–331 (for the episode about al-Nuʿmān: pp. 321–328 (t)); see also the *Chronicle of Seert* (Scher, 'Histoire Nestorienne', part 4, pp. 478–481 (ttr)) and the *Kitāb al-Majdal* (Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae*, vol. 1, p. 56 (t), p. 49 (tr), vol. 2, pp. 47–49 (t), p. 28 (t)). For a study of the Patriarch's life and career see Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšō I.* See also below, n. 9 for the question of the function of this passage in the text as a whole.

[8] One would expect the name al-Ḥīra here, rather than 'Arabia', because of the reference to a city. The name is spelled with alep rather than ʿain and could refer to the region around al-Ḥīra, since it is, among others, used to refer to the region south of the Euphrates, according to Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 364.

ⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲙⲛⲧⲣ ⲗ ⲁⲓⲥⲛ ⲉⲙⲙⲁ ⲙⲁ ⲉⲣⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲓⲥⲁ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲟⲩⲟⲁ ⲉⲙⲙⲁ ⲃⲱⲕ
. ⲁⲁⲙ ⲉⲓⲥⲁⲗ ⲛⲣⲙⲧⲟⲣⲑⲟⲥ ⲛⲣⲙⲛⲧⲉⲙⲉⲓⲁ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲙⲡ ⲉⲣ ⲛⲓⲟⲩ

ⲛⲓⲁⲗ ⲟⲩⲟⲉ ⲛⲓⲟⲩ [2]ⲥⲙⲁ ⲥⲁⲁⲃ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲃⲁⲁⲕ ⲟⲩⲱⲓⲕⲉ ⲉⲣ ⲉⲙⲁ [1]ⲉⲣⲁ {1}
ⲛⲉⲓⲣⲁ ⲛⲓⲁⲗ [3]ⲁⲗⲗⲁ . ⲁⲁⲙ ⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲙⲁ ⲛⲓⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲓⲥⲉⲃⲁ ⲛⲓⲥⲁⲃⲁ
ⲛⲓⲥⲁⲗ [4]ⲥⲁⲁⲕ ⲃⲁⲗⲃⲁ {1.2} ⲁⲗⲗⲁⲁⲕⲓ ⲛⲓⲥⲁⲗⲁ ⲡⲓⲃⲁⲗ ⲟⲩⲟⲉ ⲥⲙⲁ
[6]ⲥⲓⲟⲩ ⲛⲓⲥⲁⲗ ⲟⲩⲟ ⲉⲁⲁⲕ ⲉⲣⲁ {1.4} ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲓⲟⲩ ⲟⲩⲗⲁⲁⲃ {1.3} [5]ⲛⲟⲩⲉ
.ⲛⲟⲩⲓⲉⲓⲁ ⲓⲉⲙⲁ ⲙⲁⲓⲧ [8]ⲗⲛⲣⲉⲥⲉⲙⲉ ⲥⲧⲁ [7]ⲛⲓⲥⲁⲗⲁ

[1]lege + ⲓⲁⲥ CF, + ⲓⲁⲥ (parenthesized) D [2]ⲥⲙⲓⲥ F [3]i < C [4]< D [5]first word of E
[6]ⲥⲓⲟⲩ F [7]+ ⲁⲁⲙ D [8]+ ⲗⲛⲣⲉⲥⲉⲙⲉ ⲥⲧⲁ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲓⲉⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲓⲧ ⲉⲣⲁ E

'Who is it by whom you swear?' and they told me: 'That is God the Mighty', still adhering to this old tradition.[9]

{1} And after these things, when I, the monk Ishoʿyahb, wandered among mountains, caves and gorges in which hermits were living, I went up to the holy Mount Sinai. And I went into Egypt and the desert of Scete {1.2} and next I reached the inner desert, {1.3} and I went up to Thebes {1.4} and from there I went to the desert of Yathrib and the desert of the Sons of Ishmael, the Sons of Hagar, the Egyptian woman.

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[9] The impression is given that the whole of the kingdom of al-Nuʿmān was pagan before, but this was certainly not the case, as it was the home of the ʿIbādī Christians. For the history of Christianity in the Lakhmid kingdom, see: Trimingham, *Christianity amongst the Arabs*, pp. 188–202 and Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden*. Al-ʿUzzā was an important deity in the Lakhmid Kingdom, and Christian sources depict al-Nuʿmān as a fervent worshipper of this deity before his conversion. According to the *Kītāb al-Majdal*: 'he firmly adhered to the religion of the *Ḥunafā'* and worshipped al-ʿUzzā, and that is the star Venus (*Zuhara*)' (Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae*, vol. 1, p. 56 (t), p. 49 (tr)). The equation of al-ʿUzzā with Venus is not entirely certain (cf. *EI2* art. 'al-ʿUzzā'). In the Qur'ān al-ʿUzzā features only once, in Q 53:19, after the revelation of which the 'Satanic verses' were revealed. As for the swearing, there is an anecdote in the *Kītāb al-Aghānī* about the Lakhmid king al-Mundhir IV swearing by al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā (Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kītāb al-aghānī*, vol. 2, p. 21) Since al-ʿUzzā was known as one of the 'Daughters of God' (*Banāt Allāh*) swearing with 'the Father of al-ʿUzzā' would mean swearing by 'Allāh'. The remark 'that is the strong God', may have to be translated as 'that is the God ʿAzīzā', as it could refer to the proper name of the deity ʿAzīzā (For the question of the relationship between this God and al-ʿUzzā, see: Fahd, *Le Panthéon de l'Arabie*, pp. 50–51, and Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs*, pp. 152, 162–163). The remark would hence associate one of the epithets of God most widely used by Muslims, 'al-ʿAzīz' with pre-Islamic beliefs. There could also be a hint at the many oath-formulas used at the beginning of Qur'anic sūras (See Kandil, 'Die Schwüre in den Mekkanischen Suren', for the various formulas). The Byzantine polemicist Niketas used these as proof that Muḥammad was clearly not a monotheist; Förstel, *Niketas von Byzanz*, pp. 110–121. Griffith has drawn attention to the references to these East-Syrian ecclesiasts in this West-Syrian recension, which he interprets as an insinuation on the part of the West-Syrians that the East-Syrians are responsible for the creation of Islamic teachings (Griffith, 'Muḥammad and the monk', pp. 157–159). The passage does not allude to any negative involvement of the East-Syrians with the Arabs, however, nor is there an anti-East-Syrian strand in the rest of this text or in any of the other recensions (cf. Roggema, 'The Legend of Sergius-Baḥīrā', pp. 115–117). The passage fits with a theme present in all recensions of the Legend itself, as well as in several related texts, which is the idea that Islam can be explained as simplified Christianity which has retained some of the pagan elements of the pre-Islamic Arabs. By drawing attention to a historical episode of Christian preachers who only managed to convert the Lakhmids in a superificial manner, this recension prepares the ground for the explanation of Baḥīrā's limited success in teaching Muḥammad due to the pagan minds of the Arabs. See also: Roggema, 'Muslims as crypto-idolaters'.

{1.5} ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܟܠ ܐܬܪ ܘܐܬܪ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ

{1.5} The Sons of Ishmael were uncivilized and primitive and ignorant. They resembled desert asses and they had neither order nor law, |being| wild like untamed horses. They worshipped the idol of Awkbar, | which is a demon.[10] 49b

{2} And there with them I found this Rabban Sergius. {2.1} He was from the region of Bēt Qudshāyē, from a village called *Tshn*.[11] He was a priest in rank and he was well versed and learned in the study of the Holy Scriptures. {2.2} He was called 'Baḥīrā' and 'prophet' by the Sons of Hagar, because he prophesied to them about their kingdom and about the twenty-four kings who would rule their future generations.[12]

{2.3} Rabban Sergius was of old age. {2.4} I, the monk Ishoʿyahb, came to Rabban Sergius, to his cell, and I greeted him and was blessed by him. {2.5} Rabban Sergius, then, when he saw me, sighed and wept bitterly, saying: 'Lo, I have been in this desert for forty years and I never saw a Christian here except you today. Now I know for sure that the end of my life is at hand.'

{2.6} Then I, Ishoʿyahb, began to talk to him and I asked him how and why he had come to that desert. He answered me and said: 'While I was |staying| in a community of monks, in which I have spent a long time, {2.7} it occurred to me to go to Jerusalem to pray and receive blessing from the holy sites which are there. And I got up and left that monastery, fulfilling that | idea, and I went and sought blessing from 50b
the Holy Sepulcher and from Golgotha and the other holy sites.

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[10] A frequent allegation made in Eastern Christian texts is that Muslims worship a god called 'Akbar'; for the background of this issue, see ES, pp. 299–301 and n. 104.

[11] Bēt Qudshāyē cannot be identified. If one reads 'Bēt Garmai', as given in ES, the village 'Tshn' could refer to a village just outside Kirkuk, cf. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus Syrischen Akten*, pp. 269–270; ES has instead Shushan which is the better known Susa, capital of Elam, in the Book of Daniel (Dan 8:2).

[12] For the origin of the name Baḥīrā, see above: Ch. 2, pp. 56–59.

{3} ܐܡܪ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܠܐܒܝ ܠܘܛ[1] . ܐܡܪ ܠܗ[2] ܠܐ ܢܫܬܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܠܐ ܐܢ ܐܬ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܬ

{3} After that I went to Mount Sinai and I went up to the place where the Prophet Moses received a divine revelation. {3.1} In that place there was a monastery, in which there were monks, and there were many brothers who were administering |there|. I stayed with them for many days {3.2} and I heard from the brothers who lived there that they say that whoever stays the night, that is to say: sleeps, on top of this Mount Sinai is worthy of a certain revelation from heaven, {3.3} for 'he who is from the East is sent to the West. And he who is from the West is sent to the East'.[13]

{3.4} Then, when we finished the psalms of David and the evening prayer [we] descended from the upper church to the monastery below, and guards went around that upper church, in order to prevent anyone from going up to pass the night there on the top of the mountain, because they would not allow anyone to go up and sleep there.[14] {3.5} And when we had invoked the peace to them and when we had eaten bread with them, {3.6} I, Sergius, stood up secretly and I went up to the top of Mount Sinai. I prayed there and took blessing from it and a glorious vision was revealed to me by God. {3.7} And I saw an unspeakable light and innumerable myriads of angels. And I saw a great cross that gave light to the whole earth, | seven times brighter 50b than the light of the sun.[15] {3.9} I approached one of the angels, saluted him and bowed to him. He said to me: 'Be strong Sergius and do not fear!'

{3.11} I looked and saw the four winds of heaven stirring each other up.[16]

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[13] See: ES, p. 259, n. 9.

[14] For the prohibition of spending the night on Mount Sinai, see: ES, p. 259, n. 10.

[15] Cf. Isaiah 30:26. The vision of a cross that is seven times as bright as the sun is reminiscent of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, in which Christ foretells 'with my cross going before my face will I come in my glory, shining seven times as bright as the sun, with all my saints, my angels' (James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 511). Both in that apocalypse and here, the miraculous brightness warrants the divine origin of the visionary experience.

[16] Cf. Dan 7:2.

{3.12} אשתו אחרת. והנשים אשתו ראויה ראשה אחרי אשתו
שאינה יפה. והיפה [1]והיפה והיפה . והיפה אינה והנשים
[2]ראויה יפה .
, אין דומה שאחרי והיא [3]והיפה פחל אחרת
[4]והיפה לו [5]אינה . [6]והיפה יהיה, כי ראשונה דומה
אחרת אחרי והיפה [7]אשתו ראויה ראשה אשתו {3.13}
. לפני והיפה [9]אינה והנשים [8]והיפה והיפה אשתו
והיפה אינה והנשים דומה אינה יפה שאר שאינה
דומה [12]לו אינה . אין דומה [11]ש והיפה והיפה אינה . [10]אשתו
[13]ש ראויה אחרת שאינה .
ראשי ראויה והיפה אשתו ראינו דומה אשתו {3.14}
אינה אינה והנשים . והיפה [14]יפה שאר שאינה דומה אינה . והיפה אשתו
. יפה [15]ראינה יפה שאר לפני אינה ראויה דומה והיפה
[17]שראויה לו אינה . [16]שם דומה, שראינה והיפה אינה והיפה
5ra שאר והיפה [19]שאינה דומה* אשת | אינה שראויה כי, ואשתו
. והיפה ראויה אשתו שאר לה שאינה שראויה
אשתו ראינה [22]והיפה אינה אחרי [21]והיפה [20]אשתו {3.15}
דומה לו אינה . אין שם [24]דומה והיפה [23]והיפה פחל אינה . והיפה
לו והיפה אחרת אשתו והיפה שאינה יפה אחרת ראויה [25]ש
. ראינה דומה לפני ראויה והיפה אינה והיפה

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[1] < E [2] < F [3] ר והיפה E [4] i + a E [5] < F [6] לו והיפה C, לו והיפה DE [7] אשתו F [8] < E [9] i < C [10] והיפה אינה E [11] < C [12] + והיפה D [13] ר ~ DE [14] + אינה F [15] < D [16] ר ~ D [17] שראויה שאינה דומה C, f ר D [18] < CF, i + a D [19] * אינה דומה שם דומה יפה והיפה E [20] אשתו שאר E [21] והיפה E [22] והיפה E [23] ר והיפה CD [24] ,שראינה CDE [25] ר < C

{3.12} And I saw a white animal coming on the wind of the South and it ate the East and the West and the North and the South and it settled in the West. On the head of the beast were twelve horns.

I said to that angel: 'What is this, my Lord?'

He answered me and said: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael'.[17]

{3.13} And then I saw a black beast on the wind of the North that came and ate the East and the West and the North and the South and the sea, and it settled in the land of Babel. And on its head were seven horns of iron, one of gold and two of silver and copper.[18] And I said to the angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the victory of the Sons of Hāshim, son of Muḥammad.'

{3.14} And then I saw a bull coming with great calm and humility on the wind of the South and on its head were five horns of gold, two of silver and one of iron. And it went to the four corners of the earth and came and settled in Assur. And I said to the angel: 'What is this bull?' And he said to me: 'The kingdom of Mahdī, son of Fāṭima, and as the bull is | quiet, humble and peaceful, likewise will his kingdom be 51a more quiet and peaceful than all the kingdoms of the Arabs.'

{3.15} And I saw a lamb dressed in the clothes of a wolf, coming on the wind of the West. And I said to that angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Sufyān that will destroy all the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael with the edge of the sword and that will persecute them to the mountain of Yathrib.'[19]

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[17] For the historical background of the apocalyptic animals featuring in {3.12}–{3.18}, see above: Ch. 3.

[18] WS and the Latin recension are the only two versions of the Legend that mention the various types of metal of the horns of the Sons of Hāshim and Mahdī, son of Fāṭima (the next ruler). Dickens (Turkāyē, Ch. 3) suggests that the sequence above may represent an update of the apocalypse made in the 860s when the twelfth ʿAbbasid Caliph ruled (al-Muntaṣir or al-Mustaʿīn, depending on whether one counts Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī). This leaves unexplained how this relates to the comparable elaboration in the next part of the vision, where the rule of Mahdī ibn Fāṭima is extended as well. It could well be the case that both predictions are not meant as additions to the numbers seven and five, but rather as qualifications of the rulers who make up the numbers seven and five. This is to be found in the Latin recension, which describes the black beast with the words 'erant in capite eius septem cornua, duo ferrea, unum aureum, duo argentea et duo erea', and the bull as 'erant in capite eius quinque cornua, duo aurea et duo argentea et unum ferreum' (Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, 'Une version latine', pp. 141–142).

[19] Yathrib is not a mountain; in all other instances, this recension refers to Yathrib as a desert; ES however calls it a mountain several times.

{3.16} ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܠܐܒܘܗܝ ܐܝܟ

{3.16} And then I saw a yearling goat coming from the North. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'The seed of Joktan, who are the people from Qaṭar.'[20]

{3.17} And then I saw a lion that came from the South and hit all and trampled all with great force and nothing could withstand him. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?' And he said to me: ''Mightiest of Mighty' is his name, who is Mahdī, son of ʿĀ'isha, in whose days there will be great distress the like of which was not in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and in the days of his son Belshazzar.'

{3.18} And then I saw a man dressed in a green dress, coming from the East. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?' And he said: 'This is the last kingdom of the Sons of Hagar and Ishmael, in which will be their end and their perdition.'

{3.19} | And then I saw a chariot, that was decorated with all kinds 51b
of beautiful things, and I said to the angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Romans, who will rule at the end of all the kingdoms of the earth.'[21]

{3.20} And then I saw a great serpent creeping and swallowing all that was before him without pity. And I said to the angel: 'What is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the Son of Perdition, the Antichrist, who comes at the end of the world.'[22]

{3.21} And then I saw Satan who fell like a flash of lightning from the sky.[23] And he was filled with envy and hate toward the whole of the race of man.

{3.22} Then I saw a man who came on the wind of the East and who was dressed in glory and honor and magnificence. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the Prophet Elijah who will come at the end of the world and he is a messenger before Christ.'[24]

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[20] The manuscripts have *Maṭrāyē* which must be a corrupted form of *Qaṭrāyē*, i.e. Qatarians, found in ES and A2. For this region, see: ES, p. 261, n. 13.

[21] See the note to {3.19} in ES (p. 261, n. 14).

[22] Cf. 2 Thess 2:3.

[23] Luke 10:18.

[24] Cf. Matt 17:11.

{3.24} ܗܘ ܕܐܬܝ ܡܢ ܩܕܡ ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܐܬܝ ܗܘ ܒܬܪܝ ܘܠܐ ܩܕܡܝ ܗܘ ܠܡ ܐܬܝ ܐܠܐ

{3.24} Then I saw three angels who were dressed in white and arrayed in flames. I said to the angel: 'Who are they, my lord?' And he said to me: 'They are Gabriel and Michael and Seraphael.'[25] {3.25} One of the angels drew close to me and said to me: 'follow me!' And I went after him in great joy and in fear. {3.26} And I ascended with him in spirit to heaven, not in body, | and I saw heaven and the heaven 52a
of heavens of the Lord {3.27} and a great unspeakable light {3.28} and the orders of the angels that were in nine ranks,[26] {3.29} and the Spirit of God, descending and hovering from heaven, {3.30} and the Ancient of Days,[27] highly extolled, who is Christ, God, Savior of the world, Son of God, {3.31} and the world being dissolved and passing away, and heaven being rolled up like a scroll[28] and passing away {3.32} and everything that passed away and vanished, {3.33} and the earth being dissolved and becoming desolate and waste.[29] And all became like nothing. {3.34} I saw the Judge sitting and recompensing everyone according to his deeds. {3.35} And I saw the righteous entering paradise {3.36} and I saw Adam and Eve and Enoch and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Elijah and Aaron the priest and the assembly of the prophets and the company of the apostles, and the twelve thrones of the apostles and the choir of the martyrs and the confessors, and David chanting psalms and saying hallelujah, {3.37} and the tree of life and the tree of good and of evil and the source that issues in the middle of paradise and is divided into four sources, the Tigris, Euphrates, Pishon and Gihon, which give life to the whole of creation.[30]

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[25] Seraphael is head of the Seraphim; Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels*, p. 267. ES instead has ʿAzrael; it is worth noting that both angels mentioned in these two recensions play an important role in extra-Qurʾanic Islamic tradition, where they appear as Isrāfīl and ʿIzrāʾīl (or ʿAzrāʾīl). The former inspects hell regularly and blows the trumpet at the Day of the Resurrection and the latter separates the souls from the bodies. Together with Gabriel and Michael they form the Archangels; Wensinck, ''Izrāʾīl', *id*, 'Isrāfīl'.

[26] MS C has 'three ranks', which agrees with the traditional understanding of the celestial hierarchy as having three ranks with nine degrees, according to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

[27] Dan 7:9, 7:13, 7:22.

[28] Cf. Isa. 34:4.

[29] Cf. Gen 1:2.

[30] Cf. Gen 2:10.

{3.38} ,ܡܕܡܗܝܢ ܟܬܒܘܗܝ ܕܟܬܒܗ ܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠ ܐܬܐ ܕܐܦ
ܟܠ ܡܕ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒ ܕܐ ܟܬ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ {3.39} . ܕܡܫܟ
52b ܠܡܥܒܕ | ܡܥܝܢܘܗ ܒܝܫ ܕ ܒܗ ܟܬ ܕܟܝܢ ܬܠܬ ܠܟܠ ܟܬܒܐ
ܕܐܬܐ ܟܬ ܕܐ ܡ* ܫܒܥ ܒܗ** ܫܡܗܐ ܠܟܠ ܕܐ ,ܟܬ
ܥܒ ܠ ܒܫܡܗ ܟܢ . ܐܫ ܟܬ ܟܬ ܟܬܒ ܠ ܡ
. ܐܡ ܫܒܥ ܟܢ ܡ ܠ ܟܠ ܠ ܟܬ ܐܝܬ ܟܐ ܒ
{3.40} ,ܐ ܡ ܟܠ ܠ ܐܡ ܒ . ܐ ܡ ܟ ܐ

{4} ܡ ܐ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܡ ܒ ܐ ܟ ܠ ܟ ܠ ܐ ,ܡ
ܐ ,ܟ ܠ ܡ ܐ ,ܟ ܐ ,ܟ ܐ ,ܡ ,ܡ
ܟ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ {4.2} . ܡ ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
ܡ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ {4.3} . ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
.

{4.4} ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
.

{4.5} ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
.

{4.6} ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ
53a ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ

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[1] ܟܬܒ E [2] ܒܗ DE [3] i < D [4] ] ܒܗ ܟܬ E, ܒܫ F [5] ] ܟܬܒܬ CDE [6] < EF [7] < C [8] ** < F [9] * ܫܒ ܟܬ E [10] < C, ܒ E [11] lege < CDEF (ditt) [12] + ܠ ܒ E [13] ] ܟܬ CDE [14] ] ܐ ܒ ܐ ܟ ܠ ܐ E [15] f a DE [16] i + ܐ E [17] < DE [18] ܟ E [19] ܠ E [20] i + ܐ E [21] < D [22] f < C [23] ] ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ E [24] ] ܐ F [25] < CDE [26] * ,ܐ ,ܐ F [27] < F [28] ,ܐ ,ܐ E [29] ,ܐ F [30] * ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ ,ܐ D [31] ] ,ܐ F [32] < D, ] < E [33] ,ܐ E [34] ,ܐ ,ܐ E [35] < E, ] < C (hom) [36] ,ܐ D [37] ,ܐ ,ܐ E, i < F [38] lege f ,ܐ DE [39] ] ,ܐ ,ܐ F [40] ,ܐ DE

{3.38} And then the seraph said to me: 'look and observe that bottomless pit which is Gehenna'. {3.39} And I saw the unquenchable fire and the worm that does not die[31] and the eternal torment and innumerable people screaming and gnashing | their teeth and wailing 52b
and lamenting and sighing. And there was no one who listened to them and no one who answered them and relieved them from the suffering that does not pass away. And immediately I sighed to myself and said: 'what does a man gain if he acquires the whole world but loses his soul?'[32] {3.40} And all this I saw in spirit and not in body.

{4} And the angel said to me: 'Go to Maurice, King of the Romans, and break your staff before him and say to him: "in like manner will your kingdom be broken, and you will not, as you expect, let your sons after you inherit it".' {4.2} I went and did as |the angel| had told me, but he did not get angry with me and he did not give me an evil answer, but he said to me: 'the will of the Lord God shall be'. {4.3} And when one of the officers, whose name was Phocas the Wicked, heard that I was sent by God, he raised a rebellion against him and killed him and it was fulfilled.[33]

{4.4} Then I went to the land of the Persians, to Chosroes, the king of the Persians, and I broke half of my staff before him, and I said to him: 'in like manner will your kingdom be broken by the Sons of Ishmael'. And Chosroes did not get angry at me either and was not enraged against me. {4.5} |He| asked me and said: 'how did you come to Maurice, King of the Romans, and what did you say to him and what did he answer you and from where did you receive this revelation?' {4.6} And I answered and said to him: 'I saw that wild asses | attacked you and took the crown from your head and threw it 53a

[31] * Mark 9:48.
[32] * Matt 16:26, Mark 8:36, Luke 9:25.
[33] This is a reference to the events of November 602; see ES, p. 265, n. 27.

ملم در لهنصد در هم . مل هدم [2]معدده مدنمد [1]معدمدده مهدا مد
مدیا [3]مد مدلد [4]نجمده عصد مدلمله لا مد [5]دلا لا معلصد مدلمله
. [6]مهد

{5} ونصد در مدصدا عصد مدنمد [7]مهنه مدهنده مدنمد مد مهلمه
للم مدنصهل [11]مله [10]معدد تند [9]لهنصد مله* مدلم [9]مدلد عصم
. مدهنده عمدهمهد وده [13]مدلم [12]مدد . للمم مدلم مد لد مدمصدا
لا هدم [15]لهنده مدصدا عصد مدهنده مدنصده مدهنصهد [14]د هدصده
. مدللمده مدنصد لد [16]هدمده

{6} [17]ودد [19]ونده مم مدنصل مهنه [18]نجمد مد عمد ملم عصمد
. لا [21]نمدد [20]مد عدد مدمد لدمدصده

{6.1} **[23]حمم حدهل مدنمد عدنجم [22]مدا نصهده لمله ملم .

*[26]نهمده مدنصل لدمدصده تند [25]عمل [24]عدنجمده مهلده .

{6.4} هدم لهمدهده لدمدصده تصل لهد [28]مدنمل عمد [27]ود
[32]مدمم مدهنهه [31]مدند مدمد هدنصهده [30]مدنصهه [29]مدند
مدصدنمه مدنصمه مدنصهل هدم هدصهه . هدم هدنصهده [33]مدللمده
. [38]مدم ندهد مد [37]مدم عمدد ونه وهم [36]لمله [35]ودد [34]مدصدده
53b مد [42]مدصده مد مدمم مد [41]ونصه . هدم [40]هدنصهده | مدهنده [39]مدمه
[46]عصدهده لهمد [45]مده [44]معدده لهمدهد مدصمد [43]عمد ود . ملم
{6.5} . [49]مد [48]مدمم لهمد عمدد . [47]هدم لمعدد ونصدل لهملم

[1] هدمده C, معمده DE [2] i < C [3] i < DE [4] نجمد مدد D [5] i < E [6] عصدد E [7] + لا E [8] i + ه C [9] i < C [10] مدمده DE [11] f ~ DE, * مله لهنصهل C [12] مد حم لد EF [13] + مدمده E [14] < D, ند F (E has ند crossed out before د) [15] i < CF [16] f < C [17] i < C [18] نجمد C, نجمد E [19] ند عمد E [20] مد عمد عمد E [21] نمده CD, i + ا E [22] حد C, < E [23] + مدنمد E, + مدند D, + مدد حمد F [24] < D [25] i + ا D [26] ** parenthesized D, * < E [27] i + ه DEF [28] عمدمد مدمل C, lege + عمدمد DE, < F [29] مدند E [30] + مدهنده E [31] + مدنده E, + مدمده D [32] crossed out and changed into مدم C [33] < F [34] + syāmē C [35] i < CEF [36] lege i < CDE [37] < E [38] ~ < F [39] i < F [40] هدنصهده C [41] i < CF [42] + عمد E, ~ (321) C [43] + لهمد E [44] عمدده F [45] + syāmē C [46] lege i < CDEF [47] + لهمدهد عمد E [48] + مدند ملم لهمد عمدده E [49] lege? f + ~ D, < F

on the ground and trampled it'. Chosroes then, when he had heard this, did not give me an evil answer and said to me: 'Go in peace wherever you want.'

{5} And I left the land of the Persians and I went to the land of Bēt Rumāyē,[34] preaching that the people ought to bow in worship to one cross, and not many, because Christ was crucified on one cross, and one cross ought to be put in church. The bishops and church leaders of Bēt Rumāyē heard of me and persecuted me and set ambushes for me in order to kill me. {6} When I heard this, I left Shinar and went into this desert of the sons of Ishmael where nobody would harm me.' {6.1} All this Rabban Sergius Baḥīrā told Ishoʿyahb.

Sergius' journey to the Sons of Ishmael, to the desert of Yathrib:

{6.4} 'When I arrived here, I found the Sons of Ishmael, who were primitive and simple-minded and led an awful life. They sustained themselves with meagre and scarce food. And they worshipped idols and stones and the stars in the sky—everyone worshiping whatever he liked. They behaved like animals | and did not possess any rea- 53b
son or knowledge. When I realized that they were like this, and that they were stubborn, I prophesied concerning them whatever they liked |and| I brought them to [proper] reason. {6.5} I proclaimed to them:

[34] This is Byzantium or Asia Minor; ES has 'Bēt Aramāyē' here, which makes more sense because of the subsequent reference to 'Shinar'.

ראשי ראיך שלח לך [1]לפתחכם הלחמו ותיראו לפני תיראו
תרשעי לפלח [3]ואם ראיתם [2]כי אחרי זנה {6.8} . ראשו ויכתבה
{6.9} . ראיו [5]איש ל ויאמר לפתחיכם [4]אלוה ל ותהי
. [8]ואמרו כי ראשנה [7]ראשי ראיתם ראיך לפחם [6]ותיראו

. ראיה [14]אתיהם [13]ראשי שלו [12]ותיף [11]ואם זאבי [10]כי [9]ראיו {7}
{7.2} . ותהי [16]ראשי שליש [15]מיתיהו ראמו ותלחו שם ותלוו
תיתיו [19]לכם [18]ראיו לפני [17]כי ראמו לתרחבי תכי זהלו ואמו
[23]ראם לפני [22]תלאיו ביף [21]ואמו {7.3} . ואום ירשיו [20]תם לפני
. ראיה [24]מן ניתן ראיף

[29],ולהו [28]ראיהם ,מלשם [27]שליש [26]ראי [25]ראם אתי כי כי {7.4}
{8} . [33],מואהו [32]אתפחים* [31]מיכל ,מהמאו ראיכם [30]ראשיו
[37]ראש [36]ויך לכם* . [35]אתי ראיהיהן ותיתאם ,מהיכי [34]הלו
ואתלחיאו** . מלכם [38]תלאיו מוהי ראלם ויהיו ,מעשי
54a | ראתרחיכהו ראמו ראתרחכהו* [39]שליש ,מהיכי
יתף [45]כני* {8.1} [44]מלכם [43]והיו [42]ותיתאם [41]שליש ,מהיכי [40]
ויהי מאתו לך [51],וזאתיאם [50]אם [49]כי [48]כי אלוהו [47]ישהי אתיה [46]תלו
. [52]ראיכם

ראיתהי [54]אם ראשי ראיך ראם אף שליש ואהלו [53]יתף לכה {9}
ראיך [57]כי אתיהי ואהי לא [56],מהיאו {9.1} . ראיאם לכי [55]ראם

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[1] לפתחי לחלכם DE [2] < C [3] אם C [4] + אלוהי E [5] ראי D [6] ל אתיפו אתיתו E
[7] אלהיו E [8] ראמרוהו EF (וזלל) [9] i < E [10] < D [11] + ראו D, זאתי F [12] אתפו D
[13] ] ראשי אתהל E [14] אתיהם C [15] + כי E [16] < C [17] < CE [18] + ראיהיאו E [19] לכ
E [20] < C, lege אתיו DEF [21] תל C [22] תלאי C [23] < E [24] אתיהו E, ] אתי(ו)תל ואום
D [25] ראם E, < F [26] אי CD, < EF [27] + ראשי E [28] i < C [29] ,ולאלאו יכלאיו
F [30] + אתשאי C [31] < F [32] אתיתלאים F [33] * אתפחים זאת ,מואהו E [34] לאו
E [35] ] plural F [36] < D, כי E [37] + שי E [38] * < C (hom) [39] + ראשי D [40] **
,מהיכי ואתלחיאו ראתרחיכהו ראתרחכהו E [41] * < F (hom) [42] i + ו CEF [43] אתשי
F [44] לאתלאים F [45] i < C [46] * יתיאו E [47] ישהי אתיי C, אתיי E [48] < F [49] <
CDEF [50] < CD [51] + יזאתיאו E [52] + מלכם ואתו E [53] + כי D, יתיאו E [54] < CD, +
ראי E (but crossed out) [55] < C [56] + ראום E [57] i + ו F

'for sure you will rule the entire world for ten weeks of years'. {6.8} And when they heard that from me, they all arose together and built a cell for me in their midst, and they dug a water well for me. {6.9} I lived with them until today in peace and calm, away from persecutors.'

{7} I, Ishoʿyahb, stayed with Baḥīrā for seven days and I learnt from him all that had happened. Then Sergius Baḥīrā became ill and died. {7.2} He instructed the Sons of Ishmael and was a leader for them, because he had prophesied to them what they liked {7.3} and had written and handed down to them this book which they call 'Qurʾan'.

{7.4} When this Rabban Sergius died they embalmed him with myrrh and aloe and many unguents, and they put his body in a vault and buried him. {8} At his bones a great miracle was performed. That is: a brother killed his brother and the murderer said that the slave of the victim had killed him. And they sought recourse with the bones of Sergius and by the operation of God and through the mediation | 54a of the bones of Sergius it became known who had killed him, {8.1} for after a while the right hand of the murderer withered, while he confessed it before the eyes of many.

{9} After the death of Sergius another man stood up, who was called Kalb the Scribe.[35] {9.1} He was from the race of Abraham. He was a

[35] This refers to the Jewish convert Kaʿb al-Aḥbār. The fact that he is called 'Kalb' here, rather than Kaʿb, may be due to the fact that in Syriac the two words look similar; however, since Kalb means 'dog', it is also possible that the redactor chose to use this name in order to stress his negative view of this man. For the polemical traditions about his influence on Islam, see also: pp. 159–161, 299–305.

حلح ركس [4]ربعه [3]معكسه ردص* {9.2} . [2]كهك ربتوصبر [1]بر**
{9.3} كلح [7]ركتو هيكبه بهد [6]ربعوه [5]ركعلحه* لحمل ردص ربعه
تهجد برمد وصل [10]معلسعه* {9.4} رهحلكح [9]بهحوه ربعوبه [8]حلحه
[11]حلاه [12]هيكبه {9.5} [13]لحمل بهجده ربمد وصل [14]ركسعبر, معلح بهجد برمد وصل
[15]بر [16]ربعبه [17]ركس لبك ركس [18]بهعبوه لحح [19]ركس [20]ردوص رحلوفبه لحح
ربحعل [24]علهه بحسحص [23]بهجد ركس [22]ركلك لحح' [21]ردوص . بحسحص
هبح' بد ردوص . [25]كحوبه رحلكه بهد كه بهكوه' ربعبه بر ركعبر سكر
[30],معكعوه [29],معلكسه [28],معوبحوه* معهحوه بتر [27]وعبحهك [26]بحسحص
ردوص ركس لحسبر [32]ربهبك [31],معلح وحهسه . ركبر ربعبرك مد رهحبحص
لححبر برمد [35]هسعبرك رحله [34]ربهبك هسهه كحوه رحلكه [33]كحوه . ركس
54b | [40]برمد حححبر' رحلبك رحله . [39]بحسحص معلعبر [38]شهحوبعه [37]كه [36]رهحبح
. [42],سوصه [41]ركحبر

هحلحهلعبك [47]رحله بر [46]حلح ربعبه سكر بحوهلك [45]ربعبه حلح [44]هحبه [43]بحد
[52]بر لحمل . [51]رحلبله ركحبر' [50]سحهلعبك [49]كهك . [48]معهحوبحه
بحسهحهبر' [56]ربعبسه [55]هيكبه [54]ركبلبر* ,معلكل وححبه [53]لحمهحهبحبحه
حلح لحمل كلعبر بر*عبوه ,ردص [60]ربعه [59]رهحلححكعبه [58]وسعوه حلحوه ربلبه [57]وهه
. بحسحص وحوه رحلوفبه [63]بلحبك [62]ركحوبل [61]ركحبر وحد {9.6} . ربعبه

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[1] < C [2] + ,معكسه C, lege i + ر DE [3] < C, + ربعه وهه ردص E [4] + وهه E, * وهه D [5] lege i < CD [6] * ركعلحه ردربهه ربعبه ركتكل E, ** حلح ربعه لحح ركبوصبر ركعلحه حهجك لحح ستكل F [7] < C, ركبر ردوص E [8] حلاه E [9] بهحوه E [10] معلسعه D [11] < C [12] * بهجد برمد حلاه معلسعه حلاه هيكبه بهجد برعلحه E, < F [13] + ركتكل E [14] lege i < DF [15] هبح D [16] i + ر D [17] < C [18] i < E [19] < C [20] ,معكسه وهه D [21] ردوص ربعوه E [22] ' ~ C [23] lege هبحبر E [24] i < CE [25] ' < E [26] + كحوبه رحلكه بهد E, ' ~ C [27] + معكل C [28] lege < CDE [29] + ,معوبحوه CDE, * ~ F [30] < D [31] حلح C [32] + لحكبه ربكله حسعبره E [33] lege + بهد CDEF [34] + سه ,بعد وسعبره E [35] lege f < CD, ,بحوهلك E [36] ربعبه لحح E [37] + سد E [38] f ر C [39] حلح لحمل بكبر بهجد E [41] i < D [42] ,وهه C [43] < C [44] i + ه C [45] < E [46] لكله C [47] ك رهحبحبر C [48] < C [49] < E [50] i + ه E [51] حلح ركبر E [52] + ربهر E [53] لحمهحهبحبحه C [54] كحبر D [55] * هيكبه CEF [56] < C [57] ' وهه لحمسهحبر C [58] f < E [59] رهحلححكعبه C [60] < F [61] i < F [62] f < E [63] بلحبك بحد E

bastard of the Jews from there {9.2} and he was a scribe. This Kalb the Scribe became a teacher for them and a scribe after Sergius and a false prophet. {9.3} He taught falsehood and proclaimed untruth {9.4} and he changed what Sergius had written and taught. {9.5} He said to them 'the one about whom Christ son of Mary, has said, "behold, I will come and send you the Paraclete", that is Muḥammad'. And 'there will be a sign to you: when Muḥammad has died he will go up to heaven like 'Īsā son of Maryam, and he will rise after three days'.[36] And it happened that when Muḥammad died the people of his community came together and they embalmed him and put him in a house with great reverence. Then they closed the door to see what would become of him. And after three days they opened the door and nobody could enter the house because of the foul smell of Muḥammad's body. And no one needs to investigate | what happened 54b to it.[37]

When Kalb the Scribe died he was buried like a donkey, because his prophecy had not been fulfilled. He was also found to be a liar and an impostor. However, because of their irrationality, they abandoned the words of Rabban Sergius Baḥīrā, which were true, and accepted and adhered to this tradition which Kalb the Scribe had given them {9.6} and until this day they say that the Paraclete is Muḥammad.

[36] The Jew is described as using the Qur'anic name for Christ, 'Jesus son of Mary' (as for example in Q 2:253, Q 4:171, Q 5:110), which is transcribed from Arabic into Syriac.

[37] The death of the Prophet was one of the favorite themes of Christian and other anti-Muslim polemicists. The failure of his supposedly predicted resurrection occurs also, for instance, in the *Apology of al-Kindī* (Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 64–65 (t); Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 166–167 (tr)) and the story is one of the earliest told about the Prophet by Christians in Spain. See: Wolf, 'The earliest Latin Lives of Muhammad'. It is believed that Jews also told tales about the Prophet dying a disgraceful death. The Karaite Bible commentator Jafeth b. 'Alī from Basra believed that Isaiah 14:19 hints to it with the words: 'as a carcass trodden under feet'; Vajda, 'Un vestige oriental de «l'anti-biographie»'.

{10} *ואיך יכול[1] אדם[2] לעשות תשובה[3] ולומר[4] חטאתי ועויתי ופשעתי[5] ועשיתי כך וכך ונענשתי[6] ויסרוני ולא יסרוני[7] ואומר שהרי הוא אומר {10.1}. אם[8] יש[9] לאדם לומר[10] ולהגיד[11] ולהודות[12] בדבריו[13] ולהתוודות[14] לפני המקום ברוך הוא שנאמר[15] {10.2} ועתה ה' אלהינו המגלה עמוקות[16] ומודיע לאדם מה שיחו[17] הגלה לי יכול אדם שיעשה תשובה ולא יתוודה[18]. אמרו חכמים, כל שלא התוודה אינו יודע[19] *מה שיעשה[20] כיצד[21] שיעשה[22] תשובה[23] ויתוודה[24] ויאמר[25] אנא* | 55a [26]השם[27], חטאתי[28] *ועויתי לפניך ועשיתי כך וכך ונענשתי ויסרוני ולא יסרוני {10.3}. לפני המקום[29] ברוך הוא[30] שהוא יודע[31] בלבבות[32] שאין אדם[33] חוטא[34] ומתחרט[35] ומתוודה[36] ואומר[37] שלא יחזור לחטא עוד[38] אלא כל מחשבותיו[39] ודעותיו[40] ומעשיו[41] בטהרה[42] שנאמר {10.4} ה' אלהינו תשובתנו[43] אליך[44] אל תשיבנו[45] ריק[46] אלא תחילה[47] ואחר כך[48] {10.5} ישוב[49] ה' אלהינו[50] אלינו[51] ורחם[52] עלינו.

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[1] < F [2] * שיעשה תשובה ויאמר E [3] + ויאמר D, ושיתוודה F [4] < D [5] ,ופשעתי ומרדתי D, ושבתי E [6] וסירוני לא CF, וסירוני לא ענשו E [7] שכתוב F [8] i + ם D [9] < D [10] i < D [11] + גד D, ,ולהגיד ויאמר E [12] ויתודה שכתב E [13] ך ~ D [14] לפניו E [15] ך שנ׳ הם שם E [16] אם D [17] i < E [18] < C [19] < C [20] שיתוודה CF [21] * < E [22] i + ג CDE [23] < E [24] i < E [25] i < C, ל שנ׳ DE [26] i < F [27] * ואומר ,ואומרים E [28] ועוד D [29] * שכן יכול אדם שיעשה תשובה E [30] < C [31] < E [32] ך < E [33] i < C [34] < E [35] + ומתודה E [36] < E [37] + שוב E [38] + אם D [39] ומחשבתו CD, אם שהיו E [40] < C [41] + ,ושכר C, ,ומעשיו ומעשיו D, ,ושכר ומעשיו E [42] f + ם D [43] i < C, ך ,ש תשובתנו תשובה D, ושובה שובתנו E [44] < F [45] + שיבנו D [46] < E, מ D [47] שתחלה C [48] < E, i < D [49] וישוב D, וישב E [50] + שנ׳ E [51] < C, שתשובו E [52] + שנ׳ E

{10} After the death of Sergius Baḥīrā, I, Isho'yahb, went to the disciple of Sergius, who was called Ḥakīm and I asked him about his master Sergius and his life. From him I learnt everything very clearly. {10.1} This Ḥakīm told me: 'In my youth I was full of leprosy and I was vexed by Satan. My parents repudiated me and chased me away from them. {10.2} Then, when I was wandering in this desert, this Sergius found me and said to me: 'Why, my son, are you wandering in this deserted and lonely wilderness?'. I answered Rabban Sergius: 'Because of the foul and severe leprosy which is in my body, my parents chased me away'. {10.3} Then Rabban Sergius said to me: 'My son, believe in Christ, Son of the Living God, and He will heal | you'. 55a I, then, believed in Christ, God, immediately, as Sergius spoke, and I was cleansed from the horrible leprosy and the demon that had been tormenting me left me. {10.5} I, Ḥakīm, took Sergius and brought him to my parents immediately and when they saw me healed {10.6} they were struck by great astonishment and wonder, because of the greatness of the miracle that had been done to me. {10.7} When the people in that desert heard this, they brought a man to him who was driven cruelly by a demon, and he healed him. Then another man who had gangrene in his mouth: when they brought him to him, he healed him. Then a barren woman came to him and by means of his prayers she became the mother of many children. {10.8} Many other miracles, which are not described in this book, were performed by this man.

{11} **الحمد[1] لله[2] وحده* من[3] ومن[4] تبعه[5] ومن والاه[6] وعاداه[7] ومن[8] استغفر له[9] وسأله[10] المغفرة[11] .

{11.2} ومن لم يعلم أن ما ذكرته مما لا يعلمه إلا الله ومن علمه الله ما لم يكن يعلم ومن أن ما شاء الله كان ومن لم يشأ لم يكن ومن أن الله على كل شيء قدير ومن أن الله قد أحاط بكل شيء علما ومن أن الله قد أحصى كل شيء عددا ومن أن الله قد كتب كل شيء

{11.3} كما ذكر ومن أن الله خلق كل شيء وقدره تقديرا ومن أن الله ابتدع الخلق على غير مثال سبق ومن أن الله خلق الخلق على غير مثال احتذاه[12] ومن أن الله صور ما شاء كيف شاء على غير مثال صورة[13] ومن أن الله يحيي ويميت ويفقر ويغني ويضحك ويبكي ويوحي ويعصم ويعافي ويبتلي ويعدل ويقسط ويرحم ويغفر ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويعطي ويمنع ويفعل ما يشاء ويحكم ما يريد[14] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[15] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[16] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[17] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[18] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[19] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[20] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[21] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[22] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[23] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[24] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[25] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[26] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[27] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[28] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد[29] ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12} ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.1} . ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.2} ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.3} ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.4} ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.5} . ومن* أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.6} . وأن الله على عرشه من غير حاجة منه إلى خلقه ومن أن الله بكل شيء محيط وفوق كل شيء قاهر وأن ما في السماوات السبع والأرضين السبع وما بينهن وما تحتهن وما في البحار كلها وما تحت الثرى وما في الجنة والنار وما فوق العرش وما فوق السماء السابعة من الظلمة والنور والحر والبرد والثلج والبرد والطل والمطر وما في الأرض من دابة وما في السماء من ملك وما بين ذلك من خلق وما في الأرض من شجر وما في البحار من شجر وما في الجبال من شجر وما في الأرض من ماء وما في البحار من ماء وما في الجبال من ماء وما في الأرض من حجر وما في البحار من حجر وما في الجبال من حجر وما في الأرض من ذهب وما في البحار من ذهب وما في الجبال من ذهب وما في الأرض من فضة وما في البحار من فضة وما في الجبال من فضة وما في الأرض من حديد وما في البحار من حديد وما في الجبال من حديد وما في الأرض من رصاص وما في البحار من رصاص وما في الجبال من رصاص وما في الأرض من نحاس وما في البحار من نحاس وما في الجبال من نحاس وما في الأرض من خلق لا يعلم عددهم إلا الله ومن أن الله يحب ويرضى ويغضب ويسخط ويمقت ويكره ويحزن ويفرح ويمكر ويخادع ويستدرج ويستهزئ ويجازي ويعاقب ويثيب ويعطي ويمنع ويبتلي ويعافي ويغفر ويرحم ويعذب ويرفع ويضع ويعز ويذل ويقسط ويعدل ويحكم ما يريد

{12.7} . ومما ذكر أن الله عز وجل على عرشه وعرشه على سائر خلقه وسماواته على أرضه وأرضه على الماء وأن الماء على الريح وأن الريح على الهواء وأن الهواء على الظلمة وأن الظلمة على الثرى وأن الثرى على علم الله عز وجل وأن علم الله عز وجل على الماء وعلى الريح وعلى الهواء وعلى الظلمة وعلى الثرى وعلى علم الله عز وجل وعلى عرشه وعلى سائر خلقه وعلى سماواته وعلى أرضه وعلى

{11} Because there was no water in that desert the Arabs came to him continuously, with their cattle, and they refreshed themselves with Sergius, at that well. {11.2} They would approach him and ask him all sorts of questions. {11.3} And anything which Rabban Sergius told them they would do, because he taught them this faith to which they adhere a little. {11.5} This is | the prophecy of Rabban Sergius Baḥīrā 55b about Muḥammad, which he prophesied to them, saying: 'God will raise up a great man for you, and his name will be Muḥammad'.

{12} And on a certain day, when they were coming to that well with their cattle, Rabban Sergius was standing outside the cell and he saw them coming from far, and the boy Muḥammad was coming with them. {12.1} And when Sergius saw the boy Muḥammad, he knew that that boy was destined to be a great man, {12.2} for he saw a certain vision above his head, like a cloud. And he knew that in him his prophecy would be fulfilled.

{12.3} They went towards that well and came to him, according to their habit. {12.4} Muḥammad, however, stayed outside watching, so that when they would leave Sergius, he, Muḥammad, would go to him. {12.5} Now, Sergius said to those Saracens: 'A great man has come with you, order him to come in!' They said to him: 'There is an orphan with us and he is an ignorant fool'. Sergius said to them: 'Call him in, so that we can see him'. {12.6} And when Muḥammad entered he showed them the vision that was above his head. {12.7} They, however, were not aware of that vision.

56a ما بحدة {13.1} . ةعسدحا[2] صحبحة عد هيلبم[1] هن* | {13}
حبحدة وابحد كه حدبحا[6] وحبلا[5] ما حبحد ةحلد ةحلد[4] ةحبحا* ةححم[3]
[7]ةحبحدة ما كس كه ةعمد ةحلة بعدبحة ةحبد حد كة ةححدة
[12]ةحمبا ةوححلة بعلا ةحلعة ةبد ةحلة حةمبا [11]حدبحا ةوحبلحة ةوبحبا [10]حبحدة [9]ةمحدححة ةحمبا [8]بحبا
حدبحا ةحلة ةحبحبا كه ةبحبد ةحلة [11]حدبحا ةوحبلحة ةوبحبا
[13]ةحا حدبحبا بة بحبا حةحبحبا ةحلة ةحبحبا ةحمبا حلبم .
[18]هبلبم بحبا حبحة وبحة [17]بحبا ةحبحا [16]ةحبحا [15]ةلله ةعسدحا[14] ةبا ةبلبم {14}
. ةبم ةحبلحا بحلة [21]ةححبحا [20]كه [19]بحبا
ةححة حدحبا ةحبحا [27]حبلا [26]ةعسدحا [25]ةبحلة [24]كه [23]هبلبم بة [22]بحبا
. [28]ةبحلحا ةحلحة
{14.1} بحبا[29] بة[30] ةحبححة ةبحبحة[31] بلبم ةعسدحا .
. ةبحبا ةبحلة كه ةحلة [35]ةلبم بحبحة [34]بلبم ةحبحا بة[33] بحبا[32] .
[37]بحبحبا ةبحبحا هبلبم كه بحبم [36]بحبحة بة ةعسدحا بة ةبم {14.2}
. ةحبحة ةبحبحا [39]بة [38]بحبحبا وبحة كه ,بححبة حدحبا ,بححبة
بحبحة [41]ةحبحبا حبحبة ةحبحبحبا بحبحبا بحبحبا [40]هبلبم بة بحبحبا
ةحبحبا {14.4} بحبحة [45]بحبحة [44]حبحبحبة [43]بحبحبة ةحبحبحبا [42]بحبحبحبا {14.3} بحبحبحبة
. [47]ةبحبحبا ةحبحبحبا بة ةبحبحبحبا [46]ةبحبحبحبا بحبحبحبة كه بحبحبحبة بحبحبحبة بحبحبحبحبا
56b بحبحبحبا[51] . بحبحبحبحبا بحبحبحبحبا[50] ةعسدحا[49] بة | {14.5}[48]بحبحبحبحبا
[57]ةحبحبحبحب

{13} | Sergius stood up and blessed Muḥammad. {13.1} He said the 56a
following to him: 'The Lord God will magnify you and your descendents after you. You will become very mighty and numerous on the earth. Twelve kings will go forth from your loin, who will have their seat in the land of Shinar.[38] Their kingdom will become mighty in the whole world and they will conquer many cities and they will make powerful kings tremble before them. They and their sons will prosper and there will be peace and tranquility in the world. There will be no kingdom that rises up against them which they will not defeat. And they will subdue many nations.'

{14} At once, the boy Muḥammad opened his mouth, saying to Sergius: 'Tell me, from where did you receive this revelation?'

Sergius said to him: 'From Mount Sinai, from the place where Moses received divine revelations'.

{14.1} Muḥammad said to him: 'Who revealed |this| to you about me?'

Sergius said to him: 'God, blessed be His name, He revealed and disclosed this to me concerning you'.

{14.2} When Muḥammad heard these things from Sergius Baḥīrā, |i.e.| that he had prophesied about him and about his sons after him, he said: 'For what reason?'

Sergius said to him: 'Because of you, for you are destined to become a king and a leader for your people. {14.3} Twenty-four kings will come forth from you {14.4} and you will convert your people from the worship of idols to the worship of the one true God'.

{14.5} Muḥammad said | to him: 'Which god do you worship?' 56b

Sergius said to him: 'The Living God I worship, He who made heaven and earth and light and darkness and the seas and the rivers the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. This true God I worship,

[38] Gen 11:2: the land where Babel was built. The prediction is therefore referring to the 'Abbasids.

ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܒܪܝ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܟ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܢܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܡܘܬܐ ܠܥܠܡ ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܦܠ ܒܝܕ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܘܢܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܕܠܐ ܢܬܩܛܠ ܒܚܪܒܐ ܐܠܐ ܢܬܩܛܠ ܒܝܕ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܢܡܘܬ ܒܡܟܬܫܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܡܟܬܫܐ ܕܢܡܘܬ ܒܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܐܠܐ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܕܢܡܘܬ ܒܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܐܚܪܢܐ

and I profess and believe in his son Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. The angels in heaven and the people on the earth worship Him and praise Him, crying out: "Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord Almighty, with whose praises the heavens and earth are filled".'[39]

{14.6} Muḥammad said to him: 'And where is the dwelling-place of the god about whom you say these things?'

Rabban Sergius said to him: 'His dwelling-place is in heaven'.

{14.7} He said: 'From where do you know that?'

He said: 'From the Torah and the prophets'.

{14.8} He said: 'Who are they, the prophets?'

Rabban Sergius said: 'They are righteous, holy people, who feared God and kept his commandments. They received revelations through the Holy Spirit, and He made the hidden and future things known to them'.

{14.9} And Muḥammad said: 'What is the Holy Spirit?'

Rabban Sergius said to him: 'The Spirit of God is sent forth from Him and enters everyone who fears Him and does His will'.

{14.10} Muḥammad said: 'And you? Whom of these ones do you worship?'

Sergius said to him: 'I worship God'.[40]

{14.11} Muḥammad said: 'And whom did the people | worship in former days?' 57a

Sergius said to him: 'Some of them fire, some of them the sun, the moon and the stars, some of them stones. And when God saw all this error being committed in the world, He pitied the race of mankind and sent prophets and visionaries to them, who converted them from the error of the demons to the worship of the one true God'.

[39] Isa 6:3.

[40] For a discussion of the ways in which Baḥīrā explains his faith, see above: Ch. 4, pp. 104–113.

{14.12} אם יבוא[1] אל הבית אחד מן האחים[2] ואחר הסעודה[3] ונתן לתוך ידו[4] של אחד מהם כסף או כלי
מחתתם.

{14.13} *אם יבוא[7] אל הבית הסעודה[8] או בתוך ידו של אחד מהם, הרשות[9] ביד האחר[10] לקחת ממנו.

{14.14} אם יבוא[11] אל הבית הסעודה[12] או[13] בתוך ידו של אחד מהם[14] .

{14.15} אם יבוא אל הבית הסעודה של אחד[17] מן[18] האחים[19] ונתן לתוך ידו של אחד מהם[20] הרשות[21] ביד האחר[22] לקחת ממנו[23] אפילו[24] אחד מהם[25] שהוא[26] בחבית אחת[27] אחד מהם[28] אומר, הבית[29] שאני לקחתי אין לך רשות ליקח ממני אלא כמו שלקחתי אני ממך[30] .

{14.18} אם יבוא אל הבית הסעודה של אחד[31] מהם | ונתן לתוך ידו של אחד מהם . 57b
מחתתם[33] אחד מן[32] האחים[34] אין לאחר רשות ליקח ממנו כלום, אלא אם כן נתן לו רשות בפירוש.

{14.19} אם יבוא[35] אל הבית הסעודה[36] .

אם נתן[37] אחד מהם אוכל לפני כל אחד ואחד הרי זה מותר .

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[1] < E [2] i + ס D [3] ך < E [4] i < E [5] + מן CDE [6] < E [7] < E [8] i + ס F [9] כוי D, מן EF [10] * < C (hom) [11] < DE [12] i + ס EF [13] < C [14] + אבל אחד מהם אין רשות ביד האחר ליקח ממנו כלום, אלא אם כן נתן לו רשות הסעודה E [15] לעומת E, אבל בסף F [16] * written in a footnote D [17] + מהם E (ditt) [18] f + ר C, מהם E [19] < CDE [20] < CE, כוי D [21] < F [22] < DE [23] < D, + מלא מחתת מחתתם ואם אחד מהם רוצה ליקח ממנו כלום אין לו רשות אלא אם F (ditt) [24] < C, i + ר D [25] i + ר DE [26] f ס DE [27] < C [28] הסעודה E [29] + הזה E [30] ך ~ F [31] i + ס E [32] f < CD [33] f < CD [34] ך מחת הבית הרשות E [35] i < F [36] + מהם E [37] < CDF, מן E

{14.12} Muḥammad said: 'Whom of these do you worship and what is your faith?'

Sergius said: 'I am a Christian'.

{14.13} Muḥammad said to him: 'What is Christianity?'

Rabban Sergius said: 'That is the religion of Christ'.[41]

{14.14} Muḥammad said to him: 'What is the religion of Christ?'

Sergius said to him: 'Christ is the Word of God and his Spirit'.

The Ishmaelites confess Christ in this manner, that he is 'the Word of God and his Spirit'.

{14.15} Muḥammad said to him: 'Is Christ a god or a prophet or a human being?'

Rabban Sergius said: 'Christ is the Word. The Word of God the Father was sent from God and descended and dwelt in the womb of the Holy Virgin Mary. She conceived and gave birth without intercourse, as the Prophet Isaiah had prophesied: "Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son and his name will be Emmanuel," which is explained as 'our God is with us'.'[42]

{14.18} Muḥammad said to him: | 'How can a virgin conceive 57b
without intercourse?'

Sergius said to him: 'The Word of God descended from heaven and he put on the body from the Virgin, and Christ was born from her, according to the flesh, being God in hypostasis and nature'.

{14.19} Muḥammad said to him: 'Where is Christ now?'

Sergius said to him: 'After he stood up from the grave, Christ ascended to heaven'.

[41] The monk first refers to *Krīsṭyanūtā*, Christianity, which he then explains is *Mshīḥūtā*, which is literally 'the religion of the Messiah'.

[42] Isa 7:14 as interpreted in Matt 1:23.

{14.20} ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ . ܐܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ .
ܐܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ .
{14.21} ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ . ܐܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ .
ܐܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܘܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ
ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ
ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ ,
ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ
ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , ܐܦ ܐܢ
ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܥܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ , 

{14.20} Muḥammad said to him: 'And how long did he stay in the grave?'

Sergius said to him: 'Three days'.

{14.21} Muḥammad said to him: 'And where did he die?'

Sergius said: 'The Jews crucified him in Jerusalem and he died. After he stood up from the grave, he showed himself to his disciples and revealed his resurrection to them. And after forty days he ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of his Father, above the principalities and powers.[43] And he is the cause of life for all people.'

{14.22} Muḥammad said: 'Why do you worship a man whom the Jews crucified?'

Sergius said to him: 'I worship him, because with his crucifixion He brought about the redemption of all people and He freed them from subjugation and servitude to death and Satan'.

{14.23} Muḥammad said to him: 'Is there another prophet who has prophesied about him, apart from the Prophet Isaiah?'

Sergius said to him: 'Isaiah saw him on the high throne | and Ezekiel 58a
saw him on the chariot of the cherubim. Daniel saw him highly extolled on the clouds. And his disciples saw him manifestly when he walked on the earth and on the sea after his resurrection'.[44]

{15} Muḥammad said to Sergius: 'Ask me and whatever you desire I will do for you, on condition that the things will happen to me like you said'.

{15.1} Sergius said to him: 'I make a request to you on behalf of the Christians, who are the followers of Christ.[45] {15.2} Amongst them are hermits and monks and priests and deacons. They are humble and righteous, and not proud or haughty.[46] They fear God and keep His

[43] Cf. Eph 1:21.

[44] Cf. Isa 6:1, Eze 10, Dan 7:13, Matt 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 21.

[45] Again the two different terms for Christians are being used here, as above in {14.13}. See above, n. 41.

[46] An echo of Q 5:82. For the importance of this verse, see Ch. 4, pp. 119–121.

ܟܬ ܠܡܐ ܒܗܝ ܠܡܫܚ ܒܪܡ . ²ܡܒܥܝ ܗܠ ܗܠ ¹ܠܡܫ ܒܪ
ܠܡܝܢܗ ܫܠ ܗܪ ܟܬܒ ܗܠ ⁵ܡܝܫܥ ܗܠ ⁴ܡܒܬ ܗܠ³ ܟܬܒ ²ܗܠ
ܠܠܝܐ ܟܠܠ ܟ ܐܐܒܕ ܠܡܥܒ ܐܥܝ ܡܪ ܠܠ . ܗܠ ⁶ܐܡ ܡܫܠܟ
ܡܒܝܢܠ ܡܝܒܡܠ ܠܗܟ ܗܠ ⁷ܟܬ ܠܠ ⁷ܟܬ ⁷ܟܠ ⁷ܟܬ ⁷ܟܠ ⁷ܟܠ
ܠܡܫܚ ⁸ܒܪ ⁸ܒܪ ⁹ܒܪ ⁸ܒܪ ⁸ܒܪ ⁸

commandments. They have no concern for |this| world,[47] and they are not deceitful or arrogant. Some of them have neither women nor sons nor daughters nor riches nor possessions. Nay, all their hope depends on God. Therefore they set themselves apart and abandoned the world, in order to pray for the king and the judges and the righteous and the wicked. They enter monasteries and cloisters to live peacefully and quietly. {15.3} And if you do this to them, God will preserve you and your sons after you, and your kingdom will become powerful on the whole earth. And there will not be any kingdom that rises against you, that will not be defeated by you. {15.4} You will defeat it in accordance with the word of | Our Lord Jesus Christ. None will defeat [you] except 58b
the kingdom of the Romans with the invincible cross, the holy cross on which Christ our Savior was crucified.'

{16} Then Muḥammad opened his mouth and said to Sergius: 'How will my people believe, since I cannot read a book and I do not know anything?'

Rabban Sergius said to him: 'I will teach you anything you desire'.

{16.1} Muḥammad said to him: 'I fear that they will find out about me and kill me and do you harm. And they will regard us as impostors'.

{16.2} Sergius said to him: 'I will teach you anything you desire at night and you teach them during the day'.

{16.3} Muḥammad said to him: 'If they say to me: "From where did you receive that vision?", what shall I say to them?'

Sergius said to him: 'Say to them: "The angel Gabriel came to me and spoke to me, and he taught me everything".'

[47] Cf. Luke 21:34.

{16.4} אמר אלהי ואני אמרתי לי[3] הירחם[2] אלוה ואמסה[1] מה* יהיה[4] אמר אלהי
[5]ואמת .

{16.5} אמר אלוה[11] מה יהיה[12] לי[13] הירחם אלוה ואמסה[14] נפשי ואני
[15]אמר [16]ואמת .

59a | {16.6} מה יהיה[17] אלוה ואלהי[18] ואמת יהיה שכיר[19] לי[20] הירחם אלוה
[21]שכירי . אינו אמר ואמת אינו אמר ואמת[22] אינו אמר ואמת אלוה
[23]ואמסה אלהי[24] מה[25] ואלה[26] .

{16.7} *מה[27] יהיה אלוה[28] ואמסה[29] לי[30] הירחם אלוה ואמת[31] ואמסה
[32]ואמת אמר אינו .

{16.8} *יהיה[46] אלוה[47] ואמסה[48] יהיה אלוה[49] ואמת יהיה[50] ואמסה
[53]יהיה אמר* אמסה אלוה אלי אלה ואמת[52] אלי[51] ואמסה .[54]ואמת

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[1] < D [2] i < C [3] * < F [4] אלה C [5] + אלי C [6] < D [7] < CD [8] ואמונתי ה F [9] i < F [10] i ה F [11] ואמסה D [12] i < C [13] < F [14] אלה אי C [15] אלה D [16] + אלי C [17] < D [18] ואלהי C [19] ואלהותה C [20] אלה D [21] אינו C [22] i < C [23] i + ה D [24] < D [25] i + ו C [26] + ואמת אלה D [27] < D [28] i < D [29] < F [30] < F, * < C [31] ואמסה C, + ואמת יהיה F [32] + אלי C [33] < D [34] אלוהי C [35] < C [36] < D [37] * < F [38] ואלהי CD [39] + אי D, [40] i + ה C [41] < D [42] < CD [43] יהיה C [44] * יהיה אמונתי D [45] i < C [46] + מ C [47] * < D [48] i < C [49] < D [50] i < F [51] < C [52] i < C [53] + אלי C [54] * < F

{16.4} Muḥammad said to him: 'And if they say to me "what is there in the other world?", what shall I say to them?'

Rabban Sergius said to him: 'Say to them: "Paradise and trees of all choice are there".'

{16.5} He said to him: 'And if they say to me "What will we eat and what will we drink there?", what shall I say to them?'

Sergius said to him: 'Say to them "You will eat and drink | and enjoy 59a
yourselves in paradise. There are four rivers in paradise: one of wine, one of milk, one of honey and one of cool water. These are the Tigris of wine, the Euphrates of water, the Pishon of milk, and the Gihon of honey".'

{16.6} Muḥammad said to him: 'And if they ask me how does 'nature's call' get out of the body, what shall I say to them?'[48]

Sergius said to him: 'Say to them: "It disperses and leaves the body like sweat".'

{16.7} Muḥammad said to him: 'And if I say to them "You will eat in paradise and enjoy yourselves", they will say to me "We cannot endure without intercourse".'

Rabban Sergius said to him: 'Say to them "In paradise there are beautiful-looking plump girls with big eyes, and seven are given to each man".'[49]

{16.8} Muḥammad said: 'And if I tell them to fast and they say to me "We cannot fast the whole night and the whole day", what shall I say to them?'

[48] For the polemical exchanges between Muslims and Christians on the issue of 'nature's call' (lit. 'their necessity of the body') in heaven, see Ch. 4, pp. 121–128.

[49] For the Qur'anic references female company of the believers in heaven, see above ES, p. 281, n. 49.

{16.9} ואם יהיה שליח מן הבעל הבית אל בעל הבית ואין ביניהם
עדים[1] ואומר[2] לו שלחני ואיני יודע אם שלחך[3] אם לאו הרי זה
נאמן.

{16.10} אמר[4] שליח מן הבא[5] אל הבית[6] שלחני[7] אל פלוני ואיני
59b יודע אם שלחך אם לאו הרי זה נאמן | ואם הוחזק השליח
שאינו מתירא מבעל הבית שדרך בעל הבית לשלח שליח
בדבר זה הרי זה נאמן.

{16.12} השליח[8] שהלך לעשות שליחותו[9] ומת בדרך חזרו יורשיו
ואמרו[10] לו לא שלחך אלא על מנת שתחזיר לנו את
הדבר[11] שנתת לו[12] ואמר לא כך שלחני אלא[13] שתתנו לו
הרי זה נאמן השליח[14] נאמן לומר לא שלחני אלא על מנת
שתחזירנו לו ואם[15] אמר לא נתתי לו כלום הרי זה
נשבע[16] ונוטל. {16.13} השליח שהלך לעשות שליחותו
ומת[17] ואבד[18] השטר[19] ובא אחר[20] והביא עדים
שהשליח[21] עשה שליחותו.

{16.14} השליח[22] שאבד שטר[23] שליחותו[24] ואמר[25] שליחותי
עשויה[26] ואינו יודע אם נתנו[27] אם לאו[28] הרי זה נאמן[29]
ואינו חייב לשלם[30] שהרי הדבר ספק. השליח שהלך
לעשות שליחותו[31] ומת בדרך ואינו יודע למי נתן ולמי
לא נתן[32] הרי זה חייב[33] לשלם לכל אחד ואחד[34] מהן
שמא לו נתן. [35]ואחד מהם אומר[36] לא נתן לי כלום
הרי זה נשבע ונוטל.

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[1] + בדבר אחר D, ואחר F [2] + לו אומר C [3] < CD [4] < CD [5] שלח את C, i + a D [6] + אחר C [7] i + a C [8] והשליח CD [9] ואמר F [10] את לו F [11] < C [12] lege ואמר DF (ואולי) [13] < F [14] i a D [15] לו C [16] ומשביעין C [17] < C [18] lege? ואבדו (cf. ES) [19] < D [20] < C [21] i < C [22] i < D [23] lege + לו ואמרו C, + ואמרו D, < F [24] lege? f + ו, f < D [25] שליחותי C, שליחותו D [26] < D [27] + נתנה D [28] < F [29] + ואינו F [30] f + a C [31] < D [32] לו C [33] lege? i + ו D, i + a F [34] + מהם שמא C [35] + ואחד מהם אומר F [36] f ו C

{16.9} Sergius said: 'Say to them "Eat and drink the whole night until you can distinguish a white thread from a black thread and from a red thread, during thirty days only".'[50]

{16.10} Sergius said to him: 'Keep them from wine, pork, carrion and | strangled animals, from iniquity, from drunkenness, from licen- 59b
tiousness, from fraudulence and from vicious talking.[51] Treat the orphans and widows justly and honor your father and mother, in order that your life on earth be long, and you will have what pleases the Lord and your sins will be forgiven.'[52]

{16.12} Muḥammad said to him: 'How does one pray to God properly?'

He said to him: 'Pray seven times per day and that will not be burdensome to you, five times during the day and twice during the night, all the days of your life, as the Prophet David used to pray, who said "Seven times a day I praised you because of your judgments, o Righteous One".[53] {16.13} Let Friday be a more special day for you than any other day of the week, and make a congregation and [fixed] prayer on that day, because on |that day| you |will| have received the commandments and divine laws.'[54]

{16.14} Muḥammad said to him: 'If they say to me "Bring us testimony so that [we] may verify your promises to us", what shall I say to them?'

Sergius said to him: 'I will write a book for you and I will teach you. Then on a Friday I will put it on the horn of a cow. You go and gather your people in one place, sit with them and say to them: "Today God will send you from heaven a great book [of] commandments and laws according to which you shall live all days of your life". Then, when you see the cow coming, you get up from your place and go towards it and take the book from its horn, before the eyes of all your people, and say

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[50] Cf. Q 2:187, which mentions only the white thread and the black thread.

[51] Cf. Matt. 15:19, Luke 21:34, Acts 15:29.

[52] * Ex 20:12, cf. Matt. 19:19, Luke 18:20, Eph 6:2.

[53] Psa 119:164.

[54] Literally 'on it', instead of 'on that day'; I have added these words in order to emphasize that the story of the cow is meant to explain why Friday is the day of communal worship in Islam; cf. A1, p. 371 (and n. 32) where it is explained more clearly, and A2, p. 484, n. 89.

60a ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝܐ ܠ[1]ܡܠܐܟܐ ܕܥܝܢ ܒܥܐ ܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܒܠ ܟ | ܐܢ
ܡܝܢܐ ܫܝ[2]ܩ ܟܠ[3]ܡ ܟ ܟܬܒ ,ܝܘܚܢ {16.15} . [4]ܡܫܘ ܙܝܢ ܒܠܚ
ܐ* .[6]ܟܬܒ ܠ[5]ܟܬܒ

ܒܝܕ {16.16} ܕ[7]ܡ ܟ[8]ܪܟ ܟܬܒ ܐܠ ܐܡܪ ,ܡܪܝܐ ܢܫܡܥ ܕ
. ܟܬܒ ܠ ܒܝܢ ܟܬܒ ܫܡ ܒܠܒܝܐ ܫܟܝܢ ܟܠ ܐܡܪ

ܠܡ ܝܒܐ ܕ ܙܒܢ ܒܫܡ ܫܟܝܢ [10]ܟܝ ܒܒܐ ,ܡ [9]ܐ {17}
ܟ ܟ ܐܡܪ ܐ[11]ܡ ܟ[12]ܒܐ ܟ ܐ ܟ ܟ[13] {17.1} ܐ
ܟ ܠ[14]ܒ ܟ ܐ ,[15]ܐ ܝ[16] ,ܡ [17]ܐ ܟ ܐ {17.2} ܐ
ܟ ܐ ܐ ܟ ܐ ܐ ܟ ܐ ܐ

to them "This book has come down from heaven, | from God. The 60a
earth was not worthy to receive it, so this cow received it on her horn".'
{16.15} From that day until today, that book is called the 'Chapter of the Cow'.'[55]

{16.16} Now, Muḥammad was a humble and simple boy. He loved the teaching of Rabban Sergius, and he learnt from him the book which they call 'Qur'an'.

{17} This is the prophecy of Rabban Sergius, who prophesied about them, saying:

'All these things are bound to happen in the days of the Sons of Ishmael. There will be great distress and strife and famine and plague in many places and regions.[56] {17.1} And cities will be overturned upon their inhabitants. In them will be fulfilled the saying of David: 'their graves will be their houses forever and their dwelling places for generations'.[57] {17.2} And those who remain will be one in ten, because the Lord despised his people and withheld his inheritance, which is the Promised Land.[58]

{17.3} And in the year 1055 of Alexander, son of Philip, the Arabs will rise up and kill their king. After that there will be great, sevenfold, unrest. {17.4} In that very year the sixth millennium will come to an end.[59] Then will be fulfilled the word of the prophet 'he will beget twelve leaders' and lo, twelve great leaders came forth from his loins.[60] {17.5} Sergius, however, added twelve others, which makes twenty-four. {17.6} In four colors the kingdoms of the Arabs distinguish themselves: the white kingdom | of the Sons of Ishmael, and the black kingdom of 60b

[55] For this designation of the Qur'an, see: ES, p. 285, and n. 55. However, the ambiguity of 'Scripture' vs. '*sūra*' is not present here: the manuscripts present the name as a transliteration of the Arabic term.

[56] The prophecies of the monk that appear in this section form a more elaborate version of the vision described in {3}. For the identification of the individual figures, see above Ch. 3.

[57] Psa 49:11–12.

[58] Cf. Psa 106:40.

[59] WS is the only recension that includes a reference to the Syriac concept of 'Weeks of Creation', according to which the world exists for seven millennia. According to Pseudo-Methodius (Ch. 11:1) the triumph of the Arabs ushers in the last millennium which will mark the end of times. The same is meant here, but the beginning of the last millennium is now considered to be the mid-eighth century. See: Witakowski, 'The Idea of Septimana Mundi' and Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 2, p. 40, n. 1.

[60] Gen 17:20.

ܟܠܐ ܟܡܐ ܟܡܠܐ[1] ܡܐ ܕܟܡܠܐ[2] ܟܡܠܐ ܕܟܡܠܐ ܟܡܠܐ ܕ
ܡ ܟܐ {17.7} ܟܡܠܐ[4] ܟܡܠܐ ܕ[3] ܟܡܠܐ ܟܡܠܐ ܟܡ
ܟܡܠܐ ܕ[5] ܟܡܠܐ ܟܡ ܟܡ ܟܡ ܟܡ ܟ
ܟ ܟܡ ܟ .

{17.8} ܟ[6] ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ ܟ[7] ܟ ܟ[8] ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ[9] ܟ ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܟ[10] ܟ ܟ {17.11} ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ ,ܟ ,ܟ ܟ[14] ܟ[13] ܟ {17.12} ܟ ,ܟ[12]
ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ {17.13} ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ[16] ܟ ܟ[15] ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܟ {17.14} ܟ ܟ ܟ
{17.18} . ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ[18] ܟ[17] ܟ ܟ {17.16} .
ܟ ܟ ܟ[20] ܟ {17.19} . ܟ ܟ ܟ[19]
ܟ ,ܟ[23] ܟ ܟ[22] ܟ ܟ {17.20} . ܟ[21] ,ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ[25] ܟ ܟ ܟ[24] ܟ
ܟ . ܟ {17.21} ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
6ra ܟ {17.22} . ܟ[27] ,ܟ ܟ[26] ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ[28] ܟ ܟ ܟ {17.23} ܟ ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ {17.24} . ܟ ܟ ܟ[29] ܟ
ܟ {17.25} ܟ[31] ܟ[30] ܟ ,ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ {17.26} . ܟ[33] ܟ ܟ[32] ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ[35] ܟ {17.28} . ܟ[34] ܟ ܟ ܟ

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[1] ܟ C [2] f < C [3] ,ܟ CD [4] ,ܟ C, ,ܟ D [5] i < C [6] ,ܟ F [7] i + ܐ C [8] ,ܟ C [9] i ܐ F [10] lege? i ܐ [11] * ,ܟ F [12] i ܐ CD [13] i + ܐ F [14] < CF [15] i + ܐ C [16] < F [17] ,ܟ C [18] ,ܟ D [19] + ,ܟ F [20] ,ܟ F [21] ,ܟ CD [22] ,ܟ ~ D [23] ,ܟ F [24] ,ܟ crossed out and changed into ,ܟ C [25] syāmē < CF [26] syāmē < CF [27] ,ܟ < F [28] ,ܟ C [29] i < C [30] ,ܟ < F [31] first word of continuation of E [32] i + ܐ C [33] ,ܟ C [34] ,ܟ C [35] + ,ܟ ,ܟ ,ܟ ,ܟ E

the Sons of Hāshim, son of Muḥammad, and the red kingdom of the Sons of Sufyān, and the green kingdom of the green king who comes at the end of the rule of the Sons of Ishmael,[61] {17.7} which is the kingdom of the Sons of Muḥammad, which will take over the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael, and it will be given to the young man Hāshim.

{17.8} And this one will come from a foreign land on the road of the North with force and might in the likeness of a black cloud that covers the world, who are the sons of Hāshim.[62] {17.11} He calls them '[girdles] of darkness' and they are the rod of chastisement which is sent against the whole earth, with whom God is pleased to chastise the world.[63] {17.12} For God called the Assyrian 'a rod of anger'.[64] {17.13} Such will be the chastisement of the Sons of Hāshim on the whole earth, while they call them haughty and proud and vainglorious, boasting about themselves and their tyranny. {17.14} They will increase and let their hair grow like women. {17.16} All that they see they will desire and they will not be satisfied with it. {17.18} And they will kill everything with ease {17.19} They will shed the blood of the people like water. {17.20} In their days there will be famine and plagues in all places and distress, trials, misery and rebellions everywhere and strife and bloodshed. {17.21} In those days the people will sell their sons for the poll tax, which is exacted mercilessly | and is heavy upon them. 61a
{17.22} And they will enslave free men and women {17.23} and they will not care for the elderly and they will not have pity on the youths. {17.24} People of that time will be food for the beasts and the birds and the fowl and the raptors.[65] {17.25} And their yoke will be heavy on the people, seven times more than that of their brothers. {17.26} And Christians will be considered nothing in their eyes. {17.28} They will

[61] {17.5} and {17.6} only feature in this recension. They appear to be glosses, but the summary of the future rulers is again incorrect, just as in {0} above.

[62] Cf. Ezek. 38:9, 38:16.

[63] 'girdles' is conjecture. The text has *pīzrānē*, which could be read as *mīzrānē* 'girdle of hard material'. However, ES has another word starting with *pe*. It seems that neither text has retained the correct word. The Karshūnī manuscript gives 'oppressors' (*ẓullām*).

[64] Cf. Isa. 10:5; for the use of the verse in reference to the Abbasids, see above: Ch. 3, p. 70.

[65] *Jer. 7:33.

ܟܝܢ ³ܐܝܟܢܐ ²ܠܚܝܢ {17.29} . ܐܡܣܬܥܪ ܠܢ ¹ܠܚܕ
ܪܡܐ ܠܚܕ ⁵ܡܫܬܚܬ ܐܡܥܪܟ ܐܡܗܠܠܐ {17.30} ⁴ܐܬܐ*
ܠܚܕ ⁹ܡܫܬܚ ⁸ܠܢ ܐܡܪ ⁷ܠܚܕ {17.31} . ⁶ܫܕ ܐܚܕ
ܕ {17.32} ܐܡܬܠ ܐܡܫܠ ¹²ܐܡܐ ¹¹ܟܝܢ ¹⁰ܐܡܠ
ܡܠ ܠܚܕ ¹³ܐܬܥܒ ܐܡܐ {17.33} . ¹²ܐܡܐ ¹⁴ܠܚܕ ܐܡܪ ¹⁴ܟܠ
ܐܡܐ {17.46} . ¹⁵ܐܡܬܐ {17.45} ¹⁴ܐܡܪ ¹³ܐܡܐ {17.44}
{17.47}. ¹⁹ܫܬܚ ¹⁸ܟܠ ¹⁷ܫܢ ¹⁶ܐܚܕ ¹⁵ܐܡܐ {17.48} . ²⁰ܐܡ
ܡܐ ²¹ܐܢ ܠܚ {17.49} . ²³ܐܡ ²²ܐܬܐ ²⁴ܐܡ ²³ܐܡ
ܠ ²⁵ܫܐ {17.50} ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܡ ²⁷ܐ {17.51} ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
61b ²⁹ܐ {17.52} . ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐ {17.53} . ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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{17.54} ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐ {17.55} . ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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{17.56} ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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ED, ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
C, ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
E [2] ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
< C, ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
D [3] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
E [4] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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F [6] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
[7] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
C [8] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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< E [11] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܟܠܐ C [12] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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ܐܬܥܒ D [14] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐ < EF (hom) [15] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐܡܬܠ CD, + ܐܡܬܣܡܟ E [16] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
< E, ܐ < C [17] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
syāmē < ED [18] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
i + ܐ E [19] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܫܬܚ C, ܟܠ EF [20] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐܡܪ C [21] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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CDE [22] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
+ ܫܕ E [23] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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ܫܬܚܬ E [26] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
lege? ܟܬܪ E, ܫܡܟܝܢ F [27] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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ܐܬܐ C [29] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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+ syāmē E [35] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܟܝܢ ܡܫܟܢ ܠܢ E [36] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
i + ܐ E, ܫܠܡ F [37] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
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* ~ (3412) C [40] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐܡܪ C [41] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
< C, i + ܐ D [42] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܫܕ C [43] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܠܬ D [44] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴⁵ܐ ⁴⁴ܐ ⁴³ܐ ⁴²ܐ ⁴¹ܐ ⁴⁰ܐ ³⁹ܐ ³⁸ܐ ³⁷ܐ ³⁶ܐ ³⁵ܐ ³⁴ܐ ³³ܐ ³²ܐ ³¹ܐ ³⁰ܐ ²⁹ܐ ²⁸ܐ ²⁷ܐ ²⁶ܐ ²⁵ܐ ²⁴ܐ ²³ܐ ²²ܐ ²¹ܐ ²⁰ܐ
ܐܬܪ D [45] ⁴⁹ܐ ⁴⁸ܐ ⁴⁷ܐ ⁴⁶ܐ ⁴

uproot cities and they will call them with their names. {17.29} They will increase in power and live in the land of Shinar. {17.30} And their kingdom and their might will be in the city of Babel and in the land of the Chaldeans. {17.31} They will take the kings of the earth captive and bring them to the city of Babel, them and their wives and their sons, {17.32} bound in fetters and chains. {17.33} All the cities of the earth and their realms will become subject to Babel. {17.44} And kings will bow with their crowns before Babel {17.45} and the peoples of the earth will be gathered to her. {17.46} And the people and the cattle will be subdued under her yoke for working and building. {17.47} They will show signs and marvels in her. {17.48} And every man will show wisdom and knowledge in his workmanship.[66] {17.49} Finally then, the city of Shinar will be uprooted onto its inhabitants. {17.50} And then will be fulfilled through them that which was said: 'Woe to you city of the [Medes], a king shall come and uproot you'.[67] {17.51} All these things are bound to happen in the days | of the Sons of Muḥammad. 61b
{17.52} Signs will appear in the sky and mighty wonders on earth.[68] The sun will darken in their days and the moon will not show its light.[69] A force will descend from heaven with strong winds that blow, and the land of Babel will quake and tremble twice in one day. {17.53} And the Sons of Ishmael will become numerous like stars in the sky and like the sand of the sea. {17.54} If they could they would convert all the people to their worship and to obedience to them. {17.55} And the people in that time will like to be called 'Sons of Ishmael' and not sons of their fathers.

{17.56} Then the Sons of Ishmael will divide themselves into two factions. That is: Sons of Hāshim and Sons of Umayya and they will combat each other.[70] And they will take spoil and kill each other. And

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[66] The extraordinary building activity (mentioned only in this recension) presumably symbolizes decadence. A negative attitude to sumptuous buildings is detectable in the *fitan* and *zuhd* literature of early Abbasid times. See: David Cook, 'Moral apocalyptic', pp. 40–41 and Khalidi, 'The Role of Jesus', pp. 152–153.

[67] Not a Biblical quotation.

[68] Acts 2:19.

[69] * Matt 24:29, Mark 13:24, cf. Isa 13:10.

[70] ES speaks of a split between the Sons of Ishmael and the Sons of Abraham. Neither of these prophecies make sense in the context.

ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܟ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܟ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܐܝܟ

their destruction and perdition will be brought about by themselves, because the end of their kingdom has drawn near and arrived.

{17.57} Hāshim will beget seven kings. Two are called with one name. One is called with two names. And two of them have their names from the Torah. And one is called with a name of three signs and one is called with a name of seven signs. {17.58} And know that when they rule and die, the end of the reign of the Sons of Hāshim has come. {17.59} Then the Sons of Ishmael will wake up as if from sleep and they will fight with one another. And every one of them will say about himself: | 'I am the king'. {17.60} God will 62a
let them go their way, and He will [incite] them against each other.[71] {17.61} And their end and their perdition will be brought about by themselves, because the earth is tormented and filled by their evilness and wickedness.

{17.62} And in that time the kingdom of the Sons of Hāshim will be taken away from them and God will deliver the Sons of Hāshim into the hands of the [Son] of Fāṭima, whom all the kingdoms of the Sons of Ishmael await. {17.63} And he will recompense the Sons of Hāshim according to their deeds, because they did not follow the Law that Muḥammad taught them. They adhered to a teaching and tradition from themselves, for the teaching of the Sons of Fāṭima and that of the Sons of Hāshim do not agree with each other. {17.64} And this Son of Fāṭima, whose name is Mahdī, will uproot the fortified city which Hāshim had built in the land of Babel and he will pull down its wall and destroy its stronghold and trouble its inhabitants. {17.66} And then will be fulfilled that which was written: 'Woe to you city of Shinar, woe to you city of Babel of the Chaldeans'.[72]

[71] See ES: p. 291, n. 73.
[72] Cf. Rev 18:10.

{17.68} ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ[1] ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ[2] ܒܪ ܐܢܫ[3] ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ[4] ܒܐܪܥܐ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ[5] ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܐܪܥܐ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢܬ ܐܢܫ[6] ܐܢܬ ܐܢܫ ܘܐܢܬ ܐܢܫ[7] ܐܢܬ ܐܢܫ ܘܐܢܬ ܐܢܫ ܘܐܢܬ ܐܢܫ ܘ

{17.68} In the days of Mahdī son of Fāṭima there will be lasting tranquility and secure peace, the like of which was never in the world, because this Mahdī is sent by God. And he observes and performs the commandments and laws of their prophet Muḥammad, without altering or subtracting anything | of that which is written in the book 62b
of the Qur'an. {17.69} These ones will reign from the first Muḥammad until the last Muḥammad, the one under whom their rule of twenty-four kings, Sons of Muḥammad, will come to an end.

{17.70} The names of the Sons of Fāṭima are: 'Slave', 'Good', 'Hearer' and 'Worker'.[73]

{17.71} Those who are called the Sons of Sufyān, and who wear red like the colour of blood, all their anger and wrath will be directed at the Sons of Ishmael, because their kingdoms do not agree with each other, just like that of the Sons of Fāṭima does not agree with the Sons of Hāshim. And they will chase the Sons of Ishmael and make them flee to the desert of Yathrib, {17.72} having neither pity nor care, neither for the old nor for the young. They will slaughter among them like locusts. And they will cut open pregnant women and they do not pity them, in order to reward evil unto them, {17.73} as they did to the Sons of Joktan, who are the yearling goats. They will reach the Promised Land.

{17.74} They will be defeated by a lion who is the Mahdī, who is sent by God as a messenger to convert the world from error to the one belief in God and to the knowledge of truth. And there will be terrible persecution in the world, the like of which has never been. {17.75} And with him will be fulfilled the word of our Lord who said: 'When | the Son of Man comes will he find faith on earth?'[74] 63a
{17.76} He will direct all his anger and wrath to the Sons of Israel, and especially to the people who chose Christ for its name, {17.77} saying 'I have been sent by God to convert the world to one belief'.

[73] WS is the only recension to foretell the names of these future rulers. They are not to be found in Muslim apocalyptic.

[74] Luke 18:8.

ܟܐܡܐ {17.79} [2]ܡܫܒܚܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ [1]ܡܫܝܚ* {17.78} . ܡܫܘܬܒܢ
ܡܠܟܐ ܒܝܡܐ ܥܝܕ ܫܒܬ [3]ܡܠܐܟ ܡܫܘܬܐ ܟܐܡ ܠܐ ܟܝ ܟܝܠܘܢ
[5]ܫܝܥ ܟ ܒܝܠ ܡܫܝܚ [4]ܟܬܒܬ ܟ ܟܝܢܝܡܐ {17.80} . ܟܝܢ ܠ
ܒܗ [9]ܫܐܠ ܟ ܐ [8]ܡܠܦܘܢ ܥܒܕܐ . [7]ܫܝܥ ܒܪܟ ܐܒܐ [6]ܒܐܪ
ܟܬܠ ܟܐ ܐܡܪ [10]ܒܫܡ ܟܬܒ ܩܕܡܝ ܒܪܡ {17.81} . ܐ ܟܝ
ܟܩܒ [11]ܩܡܡ {17.82} . ܟܝܬܘܢ ܡܫܩܠ ܟܐ ܟܡ ܐܡ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܠ
ܩܥܡ {17.83} . ܟܒܝܢ ܟܬܒ ܡܫܬܘ [13]ܠܐ [12]ܟܦܘܬ ܟܬܒ
ܡܫܝܚ {17.84} . ܠ [15]ܫܒܚ ܡܫܬܘ ܒܠ ܐܠ [14]ܫܝܠ ܩܕܡ
ܪܡܐ ܒܟ [16]ܡܫܬܐ {17.85} . ܟܬܒ ܡܫܡܥ ܠܟ ܒܫܡ
ܐܠ ܐܡ {17.86} . [20]ܟܐ [19]ܩܡ [18]ܫܡ ܡܫܝ ܫ [17]ܐܠ ܐ
ܡܫܠܐ ܐܡ ܠܟ ܐܠ ܐܠ ܒܠ ܠ ܫ ܩ ܐ ܡܐ ܠ ܫ ܠ ܟ
ܡܐܪ ܫܩ [21]ܡܫ ܒ ܫ ܒ ܐ ܐ ܒ ܐ ܐ ܐ

{17.78} Churches and monasteries and places of congregation will be overturned. {17.79} There will be great affliction, the like of which never was, not even in the days of Cyrus, and there will be much slaughter on the earth. {17.80} And many of the people [will stray from the church and] from the truth and follow the worship of demons. And the one who remains Christian will be one in ten, and from one hundred one. {17.81} Then the people who live in that time will say: 'blessed are the dead who have not seen this time of distress and suffering'.[75] {17.82} And there will be famines and captivity and persecutions [and] panic and earthquakes and battles and wars. {17.83} And they will begin to say to the mountains: 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills: 'Cover us!'.[76] {17.84} And churches will be destroyed, because of the evilness of the people. {17.85} Blessed is the one who has the strength to persevere until the end of these things, as he will live.[77] {17.86} And know that it is not because God loves him that He sends him to the world, but because of the evilness and sinfulness that is great in the world,[78] and especially among the sons of the church, who corrupted the way of God and did not keep the commandments that were given by Christ, who said: 'do not swear at all'[79] and lo, they swear by Christ falsely; who said: 'love | your enemy'[80] and lo, they 63b
hate each other. And lo, they swear by Christ without being compelled. And they forswear Christ without being forced.[81] {17.87} And they feared and served the created things more than their Creator.[82] {17.88} And because of this God will deliver them to all tribulations. And then priests will be killed and monks will be stoned and deacons will be slaughtered like goats. And without love or mercy believers will be brought to destruction through all the tortures, because there is much mutual hate amongst them. {17.90} And they are hypocrites, deceivers, sorcerers, lovers of money, lovers of their stomach, lovers of vainglory, haughty, proud, wrathful, oppressors, ravenous, fraudulent, fornicators, adulterers, greedy, gluttonous, drunkards, contentious, in whom one

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[75] Cf. Eccl 4:2.
[76] * Luke 23:30, cf. Hos 10:8.
[77] * Matt 24:13, Mark 13:13.
[78] Cf. Deut 9:4–6.
[79] Matt 5:34.
[80] Matt 5:44.
[81] Cf. Pseudo-Methodius, ch. 12: Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 33 (t), vol. 2, pp. 54–55 (tr).
[82] Rom 1:25–26.

ܐܝܬ ܡܢ[1] ܕܐܡ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ[2] ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[3] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ[4] ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܒܗ ܡܫܠܡ {17.91} . ܐܘ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܒܗ ܫܠܡ ܐܘ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.92} ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ {17.93} . ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ[5] ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[6] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.94} ܐܝܬ ܡܢ[7] ܐܢܫ[8] ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[9] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.95} ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[10] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ[11] ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ[12] ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[13] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.96} ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.97} ܐܝܬ ܡܢ[14] ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[15] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.98}. ܐܝܬ ܡܢ[16] ܐܢܫ[17] ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ[18] ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.99} . ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ {17.100} ܐܝܬ ܡܢ[19] ܐܢܫ* ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ[20] ܐܘ ܫܠܡ[21] ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܒܝܪ ܐܘ ܫܠܡ

finds all evils.[83] {17.91} Because of this He will deliver them to the chastisement of the Sons of Ishmael, the wicked ones, {17.92} who are the evil rod and the chastisement that was sent against the whole world because of their evil deeds. {17.93} And when these things come to pass, know that the end and the completion have arrived.

{17.94} Then a man will come from the East, a merciful king, who is dressed in a green garment. And in his days there will be peace and quiet in the whole world. Churches and monasteries will be built and renewed and the truth will be proclaimed. He is the last king who comes at the end | of the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael {17.95} 64a and he will gather the Sons of Hagar and bring them to the desert of Yathrib {17.96} and punish them and take vengeance on the former sins of their forefathers. And he will heavily scourge the Christians who apostatized and called themselves Ishmaelites and he will make them suffer {17.97} and put on them the heavy yoke [of tax], saying: 'Why did you renounce the confession of your fathers and called yourselves Ishmaelites while you are not, and why did you cut the flesh of the foreskin, that you may look like real ones? All this you did in order to be freed and escape from the poll tax. And you abandoned your confession and the noble laws of your fathers and sought refuge with the Sons of Hagar. {17.98} O you shepherd of camels, all prophets accuse you, and the peoples of the earth are persecuted by you. No man escaped your chastisement, who was not enslaved and made subservient to you. And everyone sought refuge with you.'[84] {17.99} And through them will be fulfilled that which is written: 'Woe to them, deniers of Christ'.[85]

{17.100} And after this the king of the Romans will go out from the West, he and a great crowd with him. {17.101} They will rule over the whole earth for a week and a half. And there will be peace and quiet in those days, the like of which never was. A great peace will be

[83] Cf. 2 Tim 3:2–4.

[84] The end of this phrase seems out of tune with the rest, but may allude to people converting to Islam in order to avoid being made subservient and being taxed heavily, as {17.96}–{17.97} mention.

[85] Cf. Matt 10:33.

ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ {17.102} ܕܡܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܫ ܒܪܝܫܐ ܕܟܠܐ ܘܫܒܚ
ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܢ[3] ܐܬܐ[2] {17.103} . ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܫ ܡܐ[1] ܐܥܒܕ
64b {17.104} ܐܠܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܗ ܡܠܐܟ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܕܟܠ ܙܒܢ ܢܗܘܐ[4] ܒܥܠܡܐ
ܒܗ[9] ܕܡܬܐ ܐܦ ܐܢ[8] ܕܡܬ ܠܐ ܢܚܐ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘܗ[6] {17.105}
ܠܟܠ[10] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܬ ܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܟ ܠܗ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܘ[11]
ܐܝܟ ܕ {17.107}. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢ[15] {17.106} ܐܡܪ ܠܗ[14] ܐܬ[13] ܒܝܬ[12]
ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢ ܐܢ[18] ܐܢ ܐܢ[16]، ܐܢ[17] {17.108} . ܐܢ ܐܢ ܠܟ
ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢ[21] ܐܢ ܐܢ[20] ܐܢ ܐܢ[19] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[27] ܐܢ ܐܢ[26] ܐܢ[25] ܐܢ[24] ܐܢ ܐܢ[23] ܐܢ[22] ܐܢ
ܐܢ ܐܢ[29] ܐܢ[28] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ .
ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.109} ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ[32] ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.110} . ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[31] ܐܢ ܐܢ[30] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ[36] ܐܢ ܐܢ[35] ܐܢ[34] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[33]، ܐܢ
. ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[40] ܐܢ ܐܢ[39] ܐܢ ܐܢ[38] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[37] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.112} ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[41] ܐܢ {17.111} ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.113} ܐܢ ܐܢ[44] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[43] ܐܢ ܐܢ[42] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ .
ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[48] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[47] ܐܢ ܐܢ[46] ܐܢ[45] ܐܢ {17.114}
ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[50] ܐܢ ܐܢ[49] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.115} . ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ[51] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[52] ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.116} . ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[54] ܐܢ[53] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ
ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ[58] ܐܢ ܐܢ[57] ܐܢ ܐܢ[56] ܐܢ ܐܢ[55] ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ {17.117} .

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[1] i + ܐ C, ܐܢ E [2] i < E [3] < D [4] ܕܐܬܐ C, ܕܐܬܐ DE [5] f + ܐ C [6] < E
[7] ܐܢ ܐܢ E [8] ܐܢ ܐܢ F [9] ܐܢ C, i ܐ E [10] + ܐ E [11] < E [12] i < C [13] ܐܢ
E [14] i ܐ E [15] + ܐ E [16] ܐܢ F [17] ܐܢ F [18] i < D [19] < F [20] < C [21] +
syāmē C, ܐܢ F [22] * ܐܢ ܐܢ ܐܢ E [23] < C [24] < E [25] f ~ CD [26] +
ܐܢ ܐܢ D [27] ܐܢ DE [28] ܐܢ ܐܢ C, + ܐܢ D [29] ܐܢ D [30] ܐܢ F [31] *
ܐܢ D [32] i < C [33] + ܐ EF [34] ܐܢ E [35] f < E [36] ܐܢ CD [37] ˀ
< E [38] * < F [39] i < C [40] ܐܢ C, lege? ܐܢ DE [41] i < E [42] ˀ < E [43] i < E
[44] ܐܢ C, ܐܢ E [45] i < DE [46] f + , DE [47] < E [48] + ܐ E [49] lege ܐܢ
CDE [50] lege + ܐ CDE [51] * ܐ ܐ ܐ

in their kingdom, {17.102} for this is the last peace of which the Lord spoke in his Gospel.[86] {17.103} And then, in that time, the four winds of heaven will be stirred up[87] and kings will rise against | each other.[88] 64b
{17.104} And the Turks will come, who resemble wolves. {17.105} And the Libyans will go out, who resemble dogs and go all the way to the river Euphrates.[89] And there they will destroy each other. {17.106} And their end and perdition will be caused by themselves. {17.107} After this the treasuries of the North will be opened and the people of Gog and Magog will go out, those who are called 'dog people'.[90] {17.108} And they will do and commit all atrocities on the earth, eating all the vermin of the earth. And they do not pity the old and they do not care for the sucklings.

{17.109} And after that the Son of Perdition will go out and come in the likeness of an evil dragon that creeps over the earth and swallows and ravages without pity. {17.110} And then He will send the angel of wrath against him, and he gathers him and his crowd to one place and he burns them and finishes them off in an eyewink. And they will burn and [dissolve] as though they were nothing. {17.111} And on that very day the world will be dissolved entirely. {17.112} And the deeds of all the people will be requited. {17.113} And the deniers will be counted with the devil.

{17.114} Suddenly the Prophet Elijah will appear and come. And he will destroy the dragon with the breath of his mouth.[91] {17.115} And the king of the Romans will surrender to God and entrust the kingship to Him. {17.116} And then will be fulfilled the word of David, King and Prophet, who prophesied and chanted saying: 'Kush will stretch

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[86] Cf. John 14:27–30.

[87] Cf. Dan 7:2.

[88] Cf. Matt 24:7, Luke 21:10.

[89] The Libyans, according to the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, belong to the peoples that Alexander locked up behind the Gates of the North (see Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 16 (t), vol. 2, p. 25 (tr)). ES has Daylamis, which is geographically more logical, since Daylam lies on the Caspian Sea.

[90] 'Treasuries of the North' is a literal translation of ܓܙ̈ܪ ܒܢܨ̈ܐ. This is probably a corrupted form of *bezzai garbāyā*, 'breasts of the North', which is also used to refer to Alexander's mountains in the *Cause of all Causes* (Kayser, *Das Buch vom Erkenntnis*, p. 259 (t)). The Syriac Alexander Legend and Pseudo-Methodius use the word gate, *tar'ā*, as does our ES. See for example Reinink, *Das Syrische Alexanderlied*, vol. 1, pp. 92–95 (t) and *id*, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, pp. 41 (t).

[91] Cf. 2 Thess 2:8. For Elijah's return at the end of times, see: Matt 17:11.

ܗܘ ̈ {17.118} ̈ ܐܡܪ ̈ ܕܐܠܗܐ ̈ ܐܠܗܐ ̈ ܕܐܒܐ ̈ ܐܠ ̈ ̈ ̈

out her hand to God'.[92] {17.117} And the crown of the king and the cross of the Lord will be raised to heaven. {17.118} Suddenly the King Christ will appear and arise, and the resurrection will rule. {17.119} And the first horn will sound, and all the people will sleep the sleep | 65a of death. And the second horn will sound and all who sleep in the dust will arise and they will be stirred up as if from the sleep of death. And angels will descend from on high. And the third horn will sound and they will select the grains of wheat and they will separate the tares from the grains. They will collect the grains in the storehouses of the house of the Father and in the mansions of on high. And they will bind up the tares and throw them into the unquenchable fire.[93] {17.120} And the King Christ will appear with his angels.

{17.121} In sum: the whole of the coming of the Son of God is full of terror and swift, so that it removes and drives away all visible things from their foundations. And the earth will be overturned upon its inhabitants.

{17.122} That we may beseech Christ our God, pray for His grace and entreat him for His love, in order that He grant us that we will find intimacy with Him and confidence and that He deems all of us worthy, the sons of the Holy Church, bearers of baptism, drinkers of His absolving blood, venerators of the redemptive cross, to place us at His right-hand side, to call with that sweet-sounding voice: 'Come, enter, o blessed ones of my Father, inherit the Kingdom of Heaven that I prepared for you from the foundation of the world',[94] which shall be through the prayers of the Virgin, full of grace, Mother of

[92] Psa 68:31. This recension is the only one to include this reference to Kush. It is an allusion to the Miaphysite eschatological propaganda of Pseudo-Methodius. See Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 19, vol. 2, pp. 30–31 (esp. n. 7) and Greisiger, 'Ein nubischer Erlöser-König'.

[93] Cf. Matt 13:30.

[94] * Matt 25:34.

[5]ראמר [4]אנא* [3]ריבעה [2]אלהה ראלוהה* מאזל בה [1]ראמה
,מעזומה [9]אלה יבל ,מרכוז רעזה [8]המלה בה [7]מיה [6]ראשתלל
** *מהר, יהה הכוריה, יהה [10]ראשר, יהה הכוה, יהה הלר, יהה [12]בהר [11]בה המהלל

[13]אלה

[1] + הכהאה C, + הכהאהה DE [2] i < D [3] * < E [4] i + ו E [5] * parenthesized D [6] < CE [7] + ,יהה בהבה ,יהה ושמשהלה ,יהה לבה ,יהה הכוריה ,יהה בהיהר ,יהה בהיהר E [8] ˥ המלה E, המלהה D [9] f < C [10] הלהה ,יהה הכה ,יהה הלר ,יהה הזהבה בשה ,יהה לרהיל ,יהה C [11] הר C, * < D [12] בהרה C [13] יזהה בהלה הבשה בהבה המלה יה C, < D, ** הבזה מיבל זשהב הלהבה בהר בהלה הלהל בהר הבה ,יהבה E, *** בהרה בהר בהלה הלו בה הבילה מלר F

God, the blessed Mary, with all the saints, who love God and kept His commandments, and Mar Bar Sauma and Mar Asia, may their prayers be with us, Amen.'[95]

The End

[95] The first of these two holy men is a fifth-century abbot, the second a healing saint. Gero has noted that they occur side by side in other West-Syrian texts; see Gero, 'The Legend of the Monk Baḥīra', p. 54, n. 54.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

# THE SHORT ARABIC RECENSION

*اسم[1] الاب والابن والروح القدس الاه واحد[2]

{1} قال متولي الاخبار عن سرجيوس[3] الراهب ⌜انه قال[4] اني كنت فيما[5] ادور الجبال والمغاير {1.2} دخلت الي البريه الداخله {1.3} وطلعت الي ناووس {1.4} ومضيت الي اترب واني[6] دخلت الي بريه ولد سماعيل [7] {1.5} ونظرت[8] اليهم فوجدتهم مثل الوحوش اعني مشايخهم {2} وعندهم سرجيوس[9] الراهب {2.1} وهم يسموه بحيرا وينظروا اليه | بعين نبي وكان يخبرهم 2a عن ملوكهم ⌝وينظروا اليه بعين الكمال وكان يقول لهم عن ملوكهم[10] ويقول لهم انه يملك منهم اربعين ملك يكونوا مسلطين علي كل[11] الارض ويقتلون الملوك .

{2.3} وكان بحيرا هدا كبير السن {2.4} فلما سمعت بخبره دخلت اليه وسلمت عليه وسجدت له {2.5} فلما نظرت الي بكي[12] بكاء مرا وقال لي مرحبا بك يا اخي ان لي ها هنا اربعين سنه ما رايت | فيها نصراني ولا من 2b يدكر المسيح الاله الحق والان قد [.....][13] وايقنت ان خروجي من الدنيا قد دنا .

{2.6} فجعلت اعزيه واسكته ثم سالته عن مضيه الي تلك البريه ومساكنه ولد اسماعيل فرسم رسم الصليب وقال لي الحمد لله الدي ساقك الي حتي تفرج ما في قلبي فله الشكر دايما وابتدا وقال اخبرك ايها الاخ المباوك اني كنت في مساكن الرهبان المتوحدين | مند صباي {2.7} فبينما انا لدلك [14] 3a اد خطر في فكري خاطر وحدثتني نفسي وقالت لي كم يكون هدا[15] العجز ولمادا لم تقوم[16] تخرج الي المواضع الكبار المقدسه التي لله وتنظر اثاراتهم . ان لي هاهنا اربعين سنه وتصلي في المواضع التي فيها اثارات سيدنا اليسوع المسيح الشريفه ففعلت دلك فكانت لي هناك من القصص والاخبار ما يطول شرحها .

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[1] lege i + ب [2] * هذه خبر بحيرا الراهب U [3] سرجس U [4] ⌝ lege? < [5] + انا U [6] الي ان [7] i + ا
[8] ونضرت [9] سرجس U [10] lege? ⌝ < U [11] اكثر U [12] f ا U [13] a blank space in T, a hole in the page in U [14] lege i ك U [15] f ه U [16] < U

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God

{1} The man who was entrusted with the reports about Sergius the monk said: 'As I was wandering around mountains and caves, {1.2} I went into the inner desert {1.3} and I went up to [Thebes].[1] {1.4} And I went to Yathrib and went into the desert of the Sons of Ishmael.[2] {1.5} I looked at them and found them to be like wild animals, I mean their sheikhs. {2} And with them was Sergius the monk, {2.1} whom they call 'Baḥīrā'.[3] They regard him | as a prophet, and he announced 2a
their kings to them, saying to them that forty kings would reign from among them, who would rule the whole earth and kill the kings.

{2.3} This Baḥīrā was of old age, {2.4} and when I heard about him, I went to him, greeted him and bowed to him. {2.5} And when he looked at me, he wept bitterly and said to me: 'Welcome to you, my brother. I have been here for forty years, during which I have never seen | a Christian, or anyone who mentioned Christ the true God. 2b
Now I am certain that my departure from this world is at hand.'

{2.6} So I began to comfort him and to calm him down. Then I asked him about his journey to that desert and his dwelling among the Sons of Ishmael. He made the sign of the cross and said to me: 'Praise be to God, who led you to me, so that you may relieve |me| of what is in my heart. And gratitude be to Him forever' and he began and said: 'I had lived in the dwellings of the solitary monks | since 3a
my youth, {2.7} and while I was there an idea occurred to me and I said to myself: 'How long should this idleness be? Why not go out to the great holy places pertaining to God, and look at its vestiges? I have been here forty years; now go and pray in the places where there are noble vestiges of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And I did this and I have tales and stories about those places that would take a long time to set forth.

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[1] Read 'Thebes' according to Syriac recensions (manuscripts give 'nāwūs' (nave)).
[2] Yathrib, i.e. Medina, is consistently spelled as Atrib in the manuscript.
[3] See above: Ch. 2, pp. 56–59, for the origin of this name.

3b {3} واني صعدت | بعد دلك الي طور سينا الي الجبل الدي ترايا[1] ربنا لموسي
النبي {3.1} فنزلت عند الاخوه الدين هناك وسالتهم عن اخبارهم {3.2}
واخبروني باسرار[2] الموضع وقالوا لي كل شي تريد ان تعلمه من الاسرار فانك
تراه في راس هدا الجبل .
فقلت فهل اجد المسير الي هده[3] الجبل سبيلا .
4a فسكتوا واوما الي واحد منهم وقال لي[4] انا اخبرك ثم دنا الي بعد حين | وقال
لي ان الاسقف يمنع منا طلبت ولكن انا احتال لك اد اقاموا الرهبان في
صلاتهم فامضي سرا حتي تدخل[5] الموضع وتتق[6] بالمسيح .
{3.4} ولما قامت صلاة العشا في الهيكل ونزلوا الرهبان الي مواضعهم وداروا
الحراس ولم يبقا انسان خارج قلايته {3.5} بعد ان اجتمعوا علي اكل الخبز
واني قلت لهم اني راهب غريب ولست احب ان ادخل قلاية احدا بل اريد
4b ان اثبت في قلاية | السفلي فاجابوني الي دلك .
{3.7} فلما انصرفوا قمت في خفيه وصعدت الي راس الجبل فنظرت الي نورا
عظيما لم ارا مثله قط وارايت [7] الوف الوف وربوات ربوات [8] ملايكه مقربين
الدين لم ارا[9] مثلهم قط ورايت فيما بينهم صبيا[10] عظيم وهو يضي افضل من[11]
الشمس ضوا[12] .
{3.8} وفيما انا كدلك قد دهب قلبي وطار عقلي وكدت اسقط من شدة
5a الفزع {3.9} اد تقدم الي ملاك من الملايكه | وقال لي شد قلبك ولا تخاف
ايها الانسان وثق بالمسيح وافتح عينيك[13] علي فهم كلما تراه .

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[1] فيه جلا U [2] i < U [3] f ا U [4] < U [5] + الي U [6] وتق U [7] lege ورايت U [8] < U [9] f ي U
[10] lege صليبا (as in other recensions) [11] + ضو U [12] < U [13] عينك U

{3} After that I went up | to Mount Sinai, to the mountain on 3b
which our Lord revealed himself to the prophet Moses. {3.1} I stayed with the brothers who are there and I asked them about their stories. {3.2} They told me about the secrets of the place and they said to me: 'Anything you want know about the mysteries you will see on top of this mountain'.

And I said: 'Will I find the way to this mountain?'.

They became silent and one of them beckoned to me and said: 'I will tell you'. Then, a moment later, he came close to me | and said 4a
to me: 'The bishop forbids what you have asked for, but I know a trick for you. When the monks perform their prayers, you leave secretly, in order to go to the place, while trusting in Christ.'

{3.4} And when the evening prayer had been performed[4] in the church and the monks went down to their quarters, guards went around and nobody stayed outside his cell, {3.5} after they had come together to eat the bread. And I said to them: 'I am a strange monk and I do not like to go into anyone's cell. I would rather stay in the lower | 4b
cell.' And they allowed me to do that, {3.7} and when they withdrew, I got up secretly and climbed to the top of the mountain. And then I saw a great light, the like of which I had never seen. And I saw thousands and myriads of cherubim, the like of whom I had never seen. And amongst them I saw a great [cross] that gave light more wonderful than the light of the sun.

{3.8} While I was there like that, my heart sank and my mind took flight, and I almost fell down from the intensity of my fear, {3.9} when one of the angels approached me | and said to me: 'Take heart and do 5a
not fear, o man! Trust in Christ and open your eyes to understand all that you will see.'

[4] Literally: 'when the evening prayer stood' (*lamma qāmat ṣalāt al-'ashā*); this expression has an Islamic ring to it, since a muezzin pronounces the words *qāmat al-ṣalāt* at the end of the call for prayer, when the people have formed rows in the mosque in order to begin the prayer (a formula that, as such, may have a Syriac origin: Brockelmann, 'Iqāmat aṣ-ṣalāt'). The continuation of the sentence here suggests, however, that the prayer had ended, rather than begun.

{3.10} فلما قال لي هده القول سكنت قليلا قليلا[1] ومضي عني الجزع {3.11}
وجعلت انظر وادا اضظربت الارياح الاربعه في السما بعضها ببعض {3.12}
وادا سبع ابيض قد قبل من نواحي[2] التيمن فابتلع عامة المشرق والمغرب
والتيمن والجربيا[3] وشرب اكثر ماء البحر ونزل في المغرب | وادا في راسه 5b
اثني عشر قرنا فدنوت الي الملاك الدي تكلمني فقلت ما هدا ⸢السبع الابيض[4]
فقال لي هدا[5] ملك بني اسماعيل سكان البراري .
{3.13} ونظرت وادا سبعا مثل دلك السبع ولونه اسود وقد ظهر في رياح
الجربا والتيمن وشرب ماء البحر وحط في الارض[6] وكان في راسه سبع
قرون كبار وقرون ايضا صغار فقلت للملاك من هدا يا سيدي فقال لي هدا
ملك | بني اسماعيل ايضا من نسل رجل يقال له هاشم واسم الدي يكونون 6a
هاولاي في اثره يسما...[7]
{3.14} ونظرت ايضا تورا قد اقبل برفق واتضاع وادا هو خارج من طريق
التيمن وفي راسه خمسة[8] قرون فاكل ساير الاقطار وسار سيرا رقيق[9] حتي
حط بتابور فقلت للملاك من هدا[10] يا سيدي فقال لي هدا[11] ملك هادي
مهدي من ال م من نسل ⸢الانات من[12] اولاد امراه يقال لها فاطمه هي ابنت
م | وكما يكون التور هاديا متواضعا كدلك يكون ملكه في التواضع والهدو[13] 6b
ويكون في ايامه اراقه دم كثير ومنه يخافوا جميع الملوك بني عمه واهله وتهابه
بني اسماعيل ويكون خروجه متل اللباس الدي يخرج[14] فيه جده مح[15] ويكون
تمام ملك بني هاجر .

[1] lege < U [2] lege رياح U [3] lege الجربا U [4] ⸢ < U (corner of the leaf missing) [5] f ه U
[6] ارض U [7] blank space, lege م U [8] f < U [9] رفيق U [10] f ه U [11] f ه U [12] lege? ⸢ <
[13] f + ا U [14] lege i < U [15] f < U

{3.10} When he said these words to me, I calmed down a little and my fear disappeared. {3.11} I began to look as the four winds in the sky were stirred up by each other,[5] {3.12} and suddenly there was a white beast approaching from the winds of the South. It swallowed up the whole of the East and the West and the South and the North, and it drank most of the water of the sea, and it went down in the West | and 5b
on its head were twelve horns. And I approached the angel who spoke to me and I said: 'What is this white beast?' And he said to me: 'This is the king of the Sons of Ishmael, the inhabitants of the desert'.[6]

{3.13} And I looked and suddenly there was a beast like that one, but its color was black, and it appeared on the winds of the North [and it ate the East and the West and the North][7] and the South and it drank the water of the sea and it settled on the earth. And on its head were seven big horns as well as small horns.

And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'

And he said to me: 'This is a king | of the Sons of Ishmael as well, 6a
from the progeny of a man who is called Hāshim, and the name of the one whom they will follow is called M.'[8]

{3.14} I also saw a bull approaching with gentleness and humility, coming out of the road of the South and on its head were five horns and he ate all the lands and he ran a gentle course until he settled on Tabor. And it said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'.

And he said to me: 'This is the king Hādī Mahdī from M's family, from the progeny of the sons of a woman called Fāṭima, M's daughter. | And just as the bull is calm and humble, his reign will also be in 6b
humility and calmness. In his day there will be great bloodshed. And all the kings, his cousins and his family, will fear him and the Sons of Ishmael will stand in awe of him. He will appear in a garment like the one in which his forefather Mh appeared. And he will be the completion of the Sons of Hagar'.

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[5] Cf. Dan 7:2.
[6] For the apocalyptic animals featuring in {3.12}–{3.18}, see above: Ch. 3.
[7] Emendated on the basis of the other recensions.
[8] The name Muḥammad is consistently abbreviated to 'M' in this recension.

{3.15} ونظرت الي امير[1] لابس احمر خارج في طريق الغرب فقلت للملاك من هدا يا سيدي فقال لي هدا ملك يظهر من ال سفيان قرابة م ويطلع خيول | بني هاجر يعمهم بالسيف ويطردهم الي برية اترب[2] . 7a

{3.16} ثم ابصرت ايضا طايرا على شبه العنز[3] فيما بين الرياح فقلت للملاك من هدا [4] يا سيدي فقال لي هدا[5] ملك يظهر من بني قحطان .

{3.17} ثم ابصرت اسد عظيم فضرب[6] كل من نظر اليه ووطي واكل وبلع وليس من شي ظهر له ولا وقف مقابله من تلك الحيوانات . وقلت للملاك من هدا يا سيدي . فقال لي هدا ملكا قويا اسمه مهدي ابن عيسوا وهو يقول في نفسه | انه م وانه قام من بين الاموات وانه ادا جا لم يعجبه ما تقدم 7b ليجعل الامانه كلها واحده ويكون في ايامه شدايد كثيره وحزن لم يكون في العالم مثله .

{3.18} ثم نظرت انسان لابس لباس اصفر فقلت للملاك من هدا يا سيدي فقال هدا ملك اخر من ملوك ولد اسماعيل ويكون في ايامه هلاكهم وفناهم .

{3.19} ثم نظرت وادا نظرت [7] مركبه احسن ما يكون من المراكب والزينه فقال لي الملاك | لم لا تسالني عن هده المركبه والزينه فقلت يا سيدي فلمن 8a هدا فقال لي الملاك هدا ملك الروم وهو يجي في اخر ملك بني اسماعيل ويملك في العالم كله[8] .

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[1] lege نمر U [2] ثيرب U [3] الماعز U [4] f ه U [5] f ه U [6] فظرب U [7] < U [8] + ثم نظرت U

{3.15} And I looked at a panther dressed in red, coming out of the road of the West. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'

And he said to me: 'This is the king that will appear from the family of Sufyān, relatives of M.[9] He will mount the horses of | the Sons of 7a
Hagar, and put them all to the sword.[10] And he will chase them to the desert of Yathrib.'

{3.16} Then I also saw a bird in the likeness of a goat on the winds.[11] And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'This is the king who will emerge from the Sons of Qaḥṭān.'

{3.17} Then I saw a great lion. He hit all who looked at him and he trampled and ate and swallowed and there was nothing left of whatever came into his sight. And none of those animals could withstand him. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?' And he said to me: 'He is a strong king whose name is Mahdī, son of Esau.[12] He will say about himself | that he is M and that he has risen from the dead and that if 7b
he comes and is not pleased with what was before him, he will unify the whole of the faith. And there will be terrible things in his days and great sorrow, the like of which was never in the world.'

{3.18} Then I saw a man dressed in a yellow garment. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'. And he said: 'This is the last king from the kings of the Sons of Ishmael. And in his days will be their destruction and disappearance.'

{3.19} Then I looked and suddenly there was a chariot, the most beautiful chariot and decoration possible. And the angel said to me: | 8a
'why do you not ask me about this chariot and its decoration?'. And I said: 'for whom is this?'. And the angel said to me: 'This is the King of the Romans and he comes at the end of the reign of the Sons of Ishmael and he will rule the whole world'.[13]

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[9] This is incorrect; the Sufyānids are not relatives of Muḥammad (See above, pp. 72–76, for the background to this prophecy).

[10] This sentence is a mistranslation from Syriac. See above: Ch. 8, p. 213.

[11] The Syriac term 'goat-birds' *ṣeprāyā d-ʿezzē*) has not been recognized as a technical term for yearling goats, and has been translated literally. In {17.73} it is rendered with another erroneous form. See also: Ch. 8, p. 213.

[12] Other recensions have Mahdī, son of ʿĀ'isha.

[13] See the note to {3.19} in ES (p. 261).

{3.20} وادا بعنز [1] كبير وهو مقبل وليس يلقاه شي الا بلعه فقلت للملاك من هدا يا سيدي فقال لي هدا ابن الهلاك الدي ياتي في اخر العالم كله وهو يملك العالم كله .

{3.22} ونظرت الي رجل مقبل في رياح المشرق وهو لابس وقار وهيبه[2] | 8b وعظيمه فقلت للملاك من هدا فقال لي هدا الياس النبي من اولاد[3] ابراهيم وهو افخر[4] من في العالم بين يدي سيدنا ايسوع[5] المسيح .

{3.23} ثم ابصرت صليب وتاج طالع الي السما ونظرت ملاكين من النور يتوقدوا[6] فقلت للملاك من هدا فقال هولاى مخاييل وجبراييل .

{3.25} ثم دنا مني ومن الملاك رجل اشقر فقال لي تعال معي فدهبت خلفه وقد فرحت فرحا عظيما وكانه اخد عضدي واختلع روحي واصعدها | الي 9a السما .

{3.26} فنظرت الي السما .

{3.27} وادا نورا عظيما ليس مثله[7] قط[8] {3.28} ونظرت الي تسعة اجناد الملايكه المصطفه[9] {3.30} والي عتيق الايام ومخلص العالم هكدا ياتي في اخر الزمان[10] مثل هده العظمه {3.33} ويصير كل شي كلا شي {3.34} ويكافي كل احدا لفعله ايها الانسان افتح عينيك وقلبك في كل ما تعاين {3.35} انظر الي الصديقين كيف هم صفوف في جنان النعيم مع الملايكه مسبحين[11] وانظر الي الخاطين كيف هم في العداب | الاليم . 9b

ثم مضا الملاك وقال الحقني فلحقته فدخل الي موضع لم اراء احسن منه ولا اطيب رايحه {3.36} وقال هدا مسكن ابوك ادم وامك حوا وهولاي هم الابا

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1 بعير U 2 وسكينه U 3 ولد U 4 اخر U 5 < U 6 f ن U 7 f + ا U 8 < U 9 المسطفه U 10 + في U
11 المسبحين U

{3.20} Then I looked and suddenly there was a big goat approaching and there was nothing that encountered him or he would swallow it. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'.

And he said to me: 'This is the Son of Perdition who comes at the end of the whole world, and he will rule the whole world'.[14]

{3.22} And I looked at a man approaching from on the winds of the East, dressed in great dignity, gravity and | glory. 8b

And I said to the angel: 'Who is this, my lord?'.

And he said to me: 'This is the Prophet Elijah, from the progeny of Abraham. He is the most magnificent one in the world before our Lord Christ'.[15]

{3.23} Then I saw a cross and a crown going up | to heaven, {3.24} 9a and I saw two angels of fire burning. And I said to the angel: 'Who are these, my lord?'.

And he said: 'These are Michael and Gabriel'.

{3.25} Then a fair man came close to me and to the angel. And he said to me: 'Come with me!' And I followed him, with great delight, and it was as if he took my arm and took away my spirit and made it go up to heaven.

{3.26} And I looked at heaven {3.27} and suddenly there was a great light, the like of which there is not. {3.28} And I looked at the nine hosts of angels standing in rows, {3.30} and the Ancient of Days and the Savior of the world. Likewise he will come at the end of time, with such majesty, {3.33} and everything will become like nothing. {3.34} And everybody will be recompensed for his deeds. {33.41} O man, open your eyes and your heart to all that you see. {3.35} Look at the righteous; how they form rows in the gardens of felicity with the angels chanting praise. And look at the sinners; how they are in agonizing | 9b torment.

Then the angel left me and said: 'Stay close to me', and I stayed close to him. And he entered a place, more beautiful and pleasantly scented than I had ever seen. {3.36} And he said: 'This is the dwelling-place

[14] Cf. 2 Thess 2:3.
[15] Cf. Matt 17:11.

الطاهرين الياس واخنوخ وموسي وهارون[1] وجميع الانبياء الطاهرين
والسليحين ونظرت واداهم مجتمعين وادا اثني[2] عشر كرسيا منصوبين وداوود
يظرب[3] بالقيثاره ويرتل بالمزامير[4] {3.37} فقال لي دلك الشخص تفطن
وتفرس وسالني حتي اخبرك | ايضا ايها الانسان هاتين الشجرتين اما تلك 10a
فانها شجرة الحياه واما هادي فانها شجرة معرفة الخير والشر اما تري الي
تلك العين العظيمه اصل عيون الامياه ومنها تخرج الاربعة انهار ⸢الدي في
الدنيا[5] سيحون وجيحون والدجله والفراة {3.38} انظر الي اسفل وفكر في
العمق الدي هو جهنم . {3.39} انظر الي الخطاه الدين جحدوا دينهم كيفهم
في النار التي لا تطفا ⸣لاجل انهم نكروا المسيح امنوا بضده هم في[6] العداب[7]
| الدايم . 10b
ونظرت وادا فيها اناس [8] لا يحصا عددهم وهم يعجون ويسرون[9] باسنانهم
وليس احدا يسمع اصواتهم .

{4} فلكزني في ظهري دلك الملاك كانه نبهني من نومي وقال لي ادهب الي
موريق ملك الروم واكسر عصاتك بين يديه وقول له هكدا ينكسر ملكك
وليس هو كما تقول انك تريد لنفسك {4.2} فاما انا فاني كما خرجت من
طور سينا صرت الي موريق | فقلت له كما قال لي الملاك فلم يغضب ولم يرد 11a
علي موريق بل قال لي يكون هوا[10] الرب ومشيته {4.3} وكان دلك بحضرة
قواده وجنوده فاما احدهم لما سمع كلامي وما خاطبته به وانه يغلب وان
دلك من الله يكون خرج عليه فقاتله وقتله وتمت عليه القضيه .
{4.4} ثم الهمني روح القدس ان ادهب الي ارض فارس ففعلت ودخلت الي
كسري فكسرت نصف عصاتي بين يديه وقلت له هكدا انكسر ملكك | من 11b
ولد حمار البريه الدين هم اولاد[11] اسماعيل فلم يغضب كسري ولم يرد علي
جواب ردي بل سالني وقال لي هل دخلت علي موريق ملك الروم فقلت

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[1] وهرون U [2] f ا U [3] يضرب U [4] i < U [5] ⸢ < U [6] ⸢ < U [7] i + و U [8] i < U [9] ويصرون U
[10] f < U [11] ولد U

of your father Adam and your mother Eve. And these are the virtuous fathers: Elijah, Enoch, Moses and Aaron, and all the virtuous prophets and apostles'. And I looked and they were there together and there were twelve thrones standing. And David played the lyre and chanted psalms. {3.37} And that person said to me: 'Comprehend and look closely and ask me questions, so that I may enlighten you again. | O 10a
man, these are two trees. As for that one, it is the tree of life. As for this one, it is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And do you look at that great spring, the source of the water springs, from which the four rivers that are in the world, Sihon, Jihon, the Tigris and the Euphrates, come out. {3.38} Look down and reflect on the depth that is Gehenna. {3.39} Look at the sinners who renounced their religion; how they are in the fire that will not be quenched. Because they denied Christ and believed in his opponent they are in eternal | torment.' 10b

And I looked and there were innumerable people in it, crying for help and gnashing their teeth, and there was no one who heard their voices.

{4} Then that angel struck me on my back, as if he woke me up from sleep. And he said to me: 'Go to Maurice, the King of the Romans, and break your staff before him. And say to him: "Likewise will your rule be broken, and it is not, as you say you would want, for yourself".' {4.2} I then, as I left Mount Sinai, went to Maurice. | And I told him 11a
as the angel had told me to do. And Maurice did not get angered nor did he try to refute me. On the contrary, he said to me: 'Let the will of the Lord and His volition be done'. {4.3} And this was in the presence of his officers and soldiers, and one of them, when he heard my speech and what I had said to him and that he will be defeated and that that will be from God, he rebelled against him, fought with him and killed him and the matter was fulfilled through him.[16]

{4.4} Then the Holy Spirit inspired me to go Persia and I did so and I went to Chosroes. And I broke half of my staff before him and I said to him: 'Likewise will your rule be broken by the progeny of the desert | ass, who are the Sons of Ishmael'. And Chosroes was not 11b
angered nor did he give me an evil reply. On the contrary, he asked me: 'Did you call on Maurice, the King of the Romans?'

[16] This is a reference to the events of November 602. See ES, p. 265, n. 27.

له نعم فقال لي ايش[1] رد عليك[2] فقال هوا[3] ⸢الله يكون[4] {4.5} فقال ايها الشيخ المبارك[5] من اين جيبتنا بهده الاعاجيب ومن[6] هده الامور التي اتيت بها بحق[7]
12a فقلت له من طور سينا من الموضع الدي كلم الله لموسي وفيه قبل التوراه | وقال يا راهب خبرنا عنما ابصرت هناك {4.6} فقلت له اني رايت حمار البريه قد اخد التاج عن راسك ووطيه برجله فلم يرد كسري عليه شيا .

{5} وخرجت من ارض فارس ودخلت الي ارض ارمينيه فجعلت اكرز واقول السجود لا يكون الا لصليب واحد لا لكثير ولا يكون في البيعه الا صليب واحد واعطيتهم البراهين والشهادات البينه فبلغ[8] دلك الي اسقف
12b ارمينيه فغاضه | ذلك وامر اصحابه ان يطردوني ويخرجوني من بلادهم وجعلوا يطردوني من مدينه الي مدينه فلما رايت دلك خرجت من ارضهم وانا حزين {6} ومريت[9] الي البريه اعني برية ولد اسماعيل {6.4} وهم متل البهايم فاخبرتهم عنما يصيروا[10] اليه في[11] امرهم {6.5} وعلي ملكهم وانهم يملكون البلدان عشر سوابيع {6.6} وعرفتهم وقررت عندهم خبر الاله [12] السما وقدرته وعزته وسلطانه وعملت علي خلاصهم من الكفر
13a وردهم | عن عبادة الاصنام { 6.8} فلما تطيا[13] الايام بنوا[14] لي قلايه وحفروا[15] لي بجانبها بير ماء وانا فيها مند اربعين سنه ولهده العريشه[16] الدي تراه والحاكوره فانا بها متعزيا وانا مكرم من جميع ولد اسماعيل .

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[1] اي شي U [2] lege + فقلت له [3] f < U [4] ⸢ ~ U [5] < U [6] lege + اين U [7] < U [8] lege فبلغ
U [9] ومررت U [10] lege يصير U [11] < U [12] الاه U [13] lege تطاولت U [14] f < U [15] f < U
[16] U الغرش|الغوش؟

I said to him: 'Yes'.

And he said to me: 'What did he reply to you?', and |I said|: 'he said "Let the will of God be'." {4.5} And he said: 'O, blessed sheikh, from where have you brought us these wonders and from where, in truth, are these matters which you have brought?'

So I said to him: 'From Mount Sinai, from the place where God spoke to Moses and where he received the Torah'.

And he said to me: 'O monk, inform us about what you saw there'. 12a

{4.6} And I said: 'I saw the desert ass taking the crown off your head and he trampled it with his foot'. And Chosroes did not reply anything to this.

{5} Then I left Persia and went to the land of Armenia and I started to preach and say 'One should bow in worship to one cross only, not to many, and there should be only one cross in the church', and I gave them clear proofs and testimonies.[17] This reached the bishop of Armenia and it enraged him. He ordered his officials to expel me and to remove me from their country. They began to chase me from city to city and when I became aware of this I left their country, sad as I was. {6} And I went to the desert, I mean the desert of the Sons of Ishmael, {6.4} and they were like animals. I informed them of what would happen to them {6.5} and about their rule and about the fact that they would rule the lands for ten great weeks. {6.6} I taught them and affirmed to them the news about the God of heaven and His power, His glory and His might, and I took pains to rid them | of their unbelief 13a and to convert them from the worship of idols. {6.8} And when many days had passed, they built a cell for me and dug a water well for me next to it. And I have been staying here for forty years. And this hut that you see and the little garden; that is where I find solace. And I am honored by all the Sons of Ishmael.'

[17] ES has Bēt Aramāyē, rather than Armenia, which is more logical, considering the fact that the monk flees to Arabia afterwards.

{7} عندما[1] قمت[2] عنده سبعة ايام ولحقت سرجس هدا مرض ومات فيها {7.1} فاجتمع اولاد اسماعيل مع تلميده ومعي فاخدناه في سبانه[3] وجعلناه في ثابوث بعد ان صلينا عليه .

13b {8} واظهرت عضامه عضامه[4] عجايب كثيره ودلك انه | قتل اخ لاخيه والدي قتل اخيه زعم ان مملوكه قتله[5] {8.1} ويبست يد القاتل .

{9} وبعد دلك ظهر انسان يعرف بكتب[6] الاحبار {9.1} من نسل ابراهيم وجعل يعلم ولد اسماعيل {9.4} ويبطل قول سرجيس {9.5} وقال لهم هدا الدي يظهر منكم[7] هو البارقليط الدي ذكره المسيح انه ياتي بعده {9.7} وعلمهم اشياة كثيره من التوراه والانبيا وغير دلك من اخبارهم .

{10} واخبرني تلميد سرجيس وقد كنت انا عنده في قلايته التي

14a كانت لمعلمه وجعل | يخبرني بفضايله وبكثرة معرفته وتقدمه في العلوم بطهارته[8] وقال لي حقا[9] اخبرك يا اخي[10] وحق السيد المسيح الدي اياه اعبد اني لا ازيد ولا انقص في كلامي {10.1} اني كنت مصاب من الشيطان وكان قد طلع بي حب ردي في جميع جسدي فضجروا والدي[11] مني {10.2} وكنت ابعد[12] وحدي تايها فوحدني[13] سرجيس هدا الشيخ المبارك سالني عن حالي فاعلمته ان والديي طردوني بسبب ما نالي من

14b الشيطان | وما ظهرني من المرض {10.3} فقال لي هل تومن بالسيد المسيح وهو يشفيك من اوجاعك فقلت له ان رايت الشفا فانا اومن بالسيد المسيح عند دلك وضع يده علي ورسم علي رسم الصليب فشفاني وخرج مني الشيطان {10.5} وقال لي انصرف الي والديك ففعلت دلك

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[1] i + و U [2] i + ا U [3] badly readable, also in U (ثانه?) [4] lege < U (ditt) [5] lege + فوضعوه U علي عظام سرجس فعرف من قتله [6] lege (cf. other recensions) بكعب [7] U منهم [8] lege i و U [9] < U [10] + U حقا [11] f + ي U [12] U ادور [13] lege U فوجدني

{7} When I had stayed with him seven days, an illness struck this Sergius and then he died. {7.1} Then Sons of Ishmael came together with his pupil and with me and we put him in cloths and placed him in a coffin, after we had prayed for him.[18] {8} And his bones showed great miracles, for | a brother killed his brother, and the one who killed his 13b brother claimed that his slave had killed him. And they put him with the bones of Sergius and then it was known who killed him, {8.1} as the hand of the murderer withered.

{9} After that a man appeared who is known as [Kaʿb] al-Aḥbār,[19] {9.1} from the progeny of Abraham. He began to teach the Sons of Ishmael {9.4} and to invalidate the word of Sergius. {9.5} And he said to them: 'The one who will appear from amongst you, he is the Paraclete whom Christ mentioned as coming after him'[20] {9.7} and he taught them many things from the Torah and the Prophets and also some of the stories of theirs.

{10} Sergius' pupil enlightened me, while I was with him in his cell, which had belonged to his teacher, and he began to | tell me about 14a his virtues, the greatness of his knowledge, his excellence in the sciences and his saintliness. And he said to me: 'Verily, I will inform you, my brother, and with the truth of the Lord Christ whom I worship, I will not add to nor detract from my words. {10.1} I was afflicted by the devil and terrible pustules had erupted in my whole body. So my parents were displeased with me {10.2} and I was kept away, wandering around alone. Then Sergius, this blessed old man, found me. He inquired about my situation and I let him know that my parents had chased me away because of the devil having taken hold of me | and the illness that 14b had manifested itself in me. {10.3} And he said to me: 'Do you believe in the Lord, Christ? He will cure you from your ailments'. And I said to him: 'If I see the healing, I will believe in the Lord Christ'. At that moment he put his hand on me and made the sign of the cross over me and then he healed me and the devil left me. {10.5} And he said to me:

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[18] The word translated as 'cloth' seems to read سبانه, which is probably related to *sabaniyya*, pl. *sabānā*, 'pièce de lin ou de coton'; Dozy, *Supplément*, vol. 1, pp. 630–631.

[19] The name is given as *kutub* and is emendated on the basis Syriac recensions. About the role of this Jew in early Islam as depicted in anti-Muslim polemics, see above: pp. 159–160.

[20] For the background of this alleged prophecy, see the translation of ES, pp. 299–307.

ورجعت الي والدي معافا منما كنت فيه فلما نظرا الي فوجدوني[1] معافا {10.6}
فرحا بي فرحا شديدا وعجبا منما وهبه الله لي | {10.7} وشاع الخبر بدلك 15a
البلد فلما سمعوا الاسماعيلين مضوا[2] اليه ومعهم رجل مجنون يقاد بسلاسل
فشفاه فاما انا فاني تركت امي وابي ورجعت اليه وكنت اخدمه وصلي[3] معه
فجوا[4] اليه بغلام شاب اخرس ابكم ورجل اخر به نمله[5] فارسيه ورجل اخر[6]
كان فيه جرب وقروح فشفاهم وكان يقف علي جمالهم واغنامهم ويبارك
عليها فتنمي وتزيد {10.8} وعجايب كثيره كان يعملها {11} وكان كبارهم
واشرافهم | يجون اليه فيعلمهم العلوم الالهيه ويسمعون كلامه ويتعجبون 15b
منه ويعرفهم امانته وكان كثيرا من مشايخهم يجتمعون ويستريحون عنده
وتسرح اغنامهم وجمالهم ويسقوهم من دلك البير الدي له {11.3} وكلما
كان لهم[7] يقول[8] كانوا يصدقوه وكلما كان يامرهم كانوا يفعلوا[9] وكان يعلمهم
الامانه قليل قليل {11.4} وكان يقول لهم يا بني اسماعيل واولاد هاجر
سكان البراري {11.5} ان الله سبحانه يقيم منكم رجل عظيم {11.6} ويكون
منكم | ملوك الارض من صلبه واهله وعشيرته ويكبر ويعظم شانه جدا 16a
وعظيما جليلا يدعا علي الارض وكلكلم[10] تخضعون له وتطيعونه ويعطيه
الرب الاله[11] السما الملك والسلطان عليكم وعلي غيركم ويكون اسمه م
{11.7} وكانوا الاسماعيليين يسمعون كلامه ويتعجبون منه .

{12} ولما كان في بعض الايام وكان المعلم خارج عن قلايته فنظر من بعد
قوم مقبلين الي بير الماء وكان فيهم م | وهو صبي صغير[12] {12.1} فلما نظر 16b
اليه عرفه وقال لي انسان عظيم وجليل معهم وسيكون منه امرا عظيما وقال
لي ويحك ان هدا الدي من [13] الاسماعيليين مقبل الي بير الماء سياخد اسم
النبوه ويملك هو واولاده[14] علي الارض سنينا كثيره وجعل يحدثني احاديث
عجيبه تصير[15] {12.3} فبينما هو تحدثني اد وصلوا القوم الي البير[16] ودخلوا
اليه مثل عادتهم {12.4} وبقي م عند البير وهو يقول لرفيق له ادا خرجوا[17]

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[1] < U [2] f < U [3] lege اصلي U [4] f < U [5] نارا U [6] < U [7] < U [8] f + ه U [9] f ه U [10] lege
ودخل + [16] U وتاكد علي احدث بها [15] U وولده [14] U ع lege f [13] U < [12] U الاه lege [11] U وكلكم
[17] f < U هو الي قلايته وشربوا القوم من البير U

'Go back to your parents'. I did that, and returned to my parents, freed from what I had had. When they saw me healed {10.6} they rejoiced greatly and they were astonished by what God had granted me. {10.7} | And the news spread in that town, and when the Ish- 15a
maelites heard it, they went and took a madman to him, bound in chains, and he healed him. As for me, I left my mother and father and returned to him. I used to serve him and pray with him. And they came to him with a mute and dumb boy, and another man who had a tumor, and another who had mange and ulcers, and he healed them. And he used to devote himself to their camels and sheep and to bless them, and they grew and increased. {10.8} He performed many wonders, {11} and their important and eminent men | used to come to him and he 15b
would teach them the divine sciences. They would listen to his words and marvel at him. He taught them his faith and many sheikhs used to come together and rest with him, while their sheep and camels grazed freely and they watered them from that well of his. {11.3} Whatever he used to say to them they would believe, and whatever he commanded they would do. And he taught them the faith little by little. {11.4} He used to say to them: 'Sons of Ishmael and Sons of Hagar, inhabitants of the desert, {11.5} God, praise be to Him, will raise up from you a great man, {11.6} and from amongst you there will be | kings of the earth, 16a
from his loins, his people and his tribe. He will become great and his affair will become very important, magnificent and glorious will he be called on the earth. All of you will submit yourselves to him and obey him. The Lord, God of heaven, will give him rule and dominion over you and others, and his name will be M' {11.7} And the Ishmaelites used to listen to his talk and marvel at it.

{12} And on a certain day, while the teacher was outside his cell, he saw people from far away approaching the water well, and M, | still a small 16b
boy, was with them. {12.1} And when he looked at him, he recognized him and he said to me: 'A great and glorious person is with them. Something great will be achieved by him'. And he said to me: 'Woe to you! That one, who is approaching the well with the Ishmaelites, will acquire the standing of prophethood. He and his sons will rule over the earth for many years'. And he began to talk to me about wondrous events that will happen. {12.3} And while he was talking to me, the people arrived at the well and went inside |his cell|, according to their habit. {12.4} And M stayed at the well, saying to a comrade of his: 'When the sheikhs come out, | you and I will enter'. 17a

المشايخ | دخلت انا وانت . 17a
{12.5} فقال المعلم للذين كانوا عنده ان معكم انسان عظيم[1] . سيعظم[2] شانه . فقالوا له ان معنا غلامين فقال لهم ادعوا بهم لانظر اليهم {12.6} فاادعوا[3] بهما فلما دخلا اليه عظم احدهم ويجله ورفع محله اكثر من الاخر واراهم[4] العلامه التي كانت فيه واعلمهم بما ابصره علي راسه {12.8} وقال لهم احفضوا واحدروا عليه من اليهود .
{13} وقام المعلم وصلا وبارك عليه ودعا له وقال الرب يعطيك يا ولدي | 17b الملك ولاولادك[5] من بعدك ويكبر اسمك يعلوا[6] دكرك علي جميع الامم ويكثر جيوشك جدا واثنا عشر ملكا تكون من نسلك ويملك من اهلك ملوك كثيره ويكون ملكهم في المغرب وارض بابل وغيرها ومسكنهم اكثر ارض اهل بابل العظما وملكهم يدوم في الارض ويفتحون مدنا عظيمه ويكسرون جيوش كثيره ويغلبون ملوكا جبابره ويكون بينهم السلامه ولا يقيم[7] | ملك 18a مقابلهم الا يكون مغلوب وقال له يا ابني عود الي فلما سمع م كلام المعلم عانقه وانصرف هو والجماعه[8] فلما كان بعد مده عاد اليه وسلم عليه فقال له المعلم يا ابني اسمع واوعي كلما تسمع مني في قلبك فلم يزالا يحدثان طويلا .
{14} فقال له م من اين اتيت بهده العلم .
{14.1} فقال له من طور سينا حيث كلم الله لموسي فقال له م فمن الدي كشف لك دلك .
فقال له بحيرا الله الدي كشف لي عنه واعلمني اياه .
{14.2} | فقال له م فمن الدي بعثك[9] تنبين[10] به[11] . 18b
فقال له بحيرا الله الدي بعتني الخبر بما يكون منك وانك تكون ملك وريسا ومدبر لبني عمك وغيرهم من ساير الامم {14.3} واربعة وعشرون ملك تقوم من نسلك وبك تنشرف بنو عمك {14.4} وانت تخلصهم من السجود للاصنام والشياطين والشرك بالله الي ان يسجدون لله الواحد .
{14.5} فقال له م وانت لاي شي تسجد .

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[1] < U [2] i + و U [3] فادعوا U [4] واوراهم U [5] ولولدك U [6] lege f < U [7] يكون U [8] f < U [9] + الي U [10] lege تنبا U [11] U مني

{12.5} And the teacher said to those who were with him: 'There is someone important with you, who will have great stature'.

They said to him: 'There are two boys with us'.

He said to them: 'Call them in, so that I can see them'.

{12.6} And they called them in and when they entered he extolled one of the two and glorified him and raised him to a higher position than the other one. He showed them the sign that was on him and informed them of what he saw above his head. {12.8} And he said to them: 'Protect him and guard him against the Jews', {13} and the teacher rose, prayed, blessed him, and called him to him. {13.1} And he said: 'God will grant the kingship, my son, | to you and your sons 17b after you. And your name will become great and your repute will spread over all the nations. Your armies will be very numerous and twelve kings will come forth from your descendents. Many kings will reign from amongst your kin and their rule will be in the West and in the land of Babel and other places. Their abode will be most of the great land of the people of Babel and their rule will last long on earth. They will capture great cities and defeat many armies and they will overpower giant kings. And there will be peace amongst them. No king will rise up | against them who will not be defeated.' And he said 18a to him: 'Return to me, My son'. And when M had heard the words of the teacher he embraced him and departed with the group. After some time he returned and greeted him. The teacher said to him: 'My son, listen and keep all that you hear from me in your heart', and they continued to talk for a long time.

{14} And M said to him: 'From where did you get this knowledge?'

He said to him: 'From Mount Sinai where God spoke to Moses'.

{14.1} And M said to him: 'And who was the one who revealed it to you?'

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'God is the one who revealed it to me and who taught it to me'.

{14.2} |And M said to him: 'And who is the one who sent you to 18b prophesy about it?'.

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'It was God who sent me to inform you of what will become of you and that you will be king, head and leader of your people and others from all the nations. {14.3} Twenty-four kings will rise from your progeny and your people will be honored because of you. {14.4} You will liberate them from the worship of idols and devils and polytheism, in order that they worship the One God.'

{14.5} And M said to him: 'And you, what do you worship?'

فقال له بحيرا انا اعبد الله | الدي خلق السماوات والارض والنور والظلمه 19a
والبحار والجبال وطيور[1] السما[2] وسباع الارض والناس وكل شي يدب علي
وجه الارض الدي تسبح له الملايكه وتقول قدوس قدوس قدوس رب
القوات الدي امتلت الارض من تسبحته .
{14.6} فقال له م اين مسكن هدا الاله الدي تصفه بهده الصفه .
فقال له بحيرا مسكنه في السماوات .
{14.7} فقال له م فانت من اين تدري بهدا .
| فقال له بحيرا التوراه[3] والانبيا . 19b
{14.8} فقال له م من هم الانبيا .
فقال له بحيرا اناس من اولاد[4] ادم صديقين يخافون الله يحافظين وصاياه
اعلمهم روح القدس والهمهم الله ان يقولوا[5] الشي قبل ان يكون .
{14.9} فقال له م من هو روح[6] القدس .
فقال له بحيرا روح القدس هو روح الله الحي بعثه[7] الله من قبله الي كل من
يخافه ويعمل هواه .
{14.10} فقال له م وانت لمن تسجد .
فقال له بحيرا اليس قد قلت لك اني اسجد لله | 20a
{14.11} قال له م والناس كلهم لمن يسجدون .
قال له بحيرا اما اصحابي والدين يقولون بقولي فهم يسجدون لله واما ساير
الامم فهم يختلفون بعضهم يسجدون للحجاره وبعضهم للشمس وبعضهم
للقمر وبعضهم للشياطين وبعضهم للاصنام المنحوته مثل اكثر بني عمك
والدين هم الان[8] مشركون فلما راي الله جل اسمه وتعالي دكره الي العالم
تحنن عليهم ورحم خلقه فبعث الانبيا ردوا خلقه الي معرفة الله | والسجود 20b
لله .[9]

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[1] طير U [2] i + ب U [3] f < U [4] ولد U [5] f < U [6] الروح U [7] lege i + ي U [8] lege i ل U [9] lege U (hom قال له م سمعتك تذكر المسيح فاخبرني من هو هذه المسيح فقال له ان المسيح كلمة الله وروحه + in T)

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'I serve God, | who has created the heavens 19a
and the earth, light and darkness, the seas and the mountains, the birds in the sky and the beasts of the land, the people and all that creeps on the face of the earth, whom the angels praise, saying 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of hosts, with whose praises the earth is filled'.'[21]

{14.6} M said: 'Where is the abode of this god, whom you describe in this way?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'His abode is in heaven'.

{14.7} And M said to him: 'And you, from where do you know this?'

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'From the Torah and the Prophets'. 19b

{14.8} And M said to him: 'Who are they, the prophets?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Righteous people from Adam's children, who fear God and keep his commandments. The Holy Spirit taught them and God inspired them to say a thing before it happens'.

{14.9} M said to him: 'Who is the Holy Spirit?'

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'The Holy Spirit is the spirit of the Living God. God sends it from with Him to all who fear Him and fulfill His will'.

{14.10} And M said to him: 'And you, who do you worship?'

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'Have I not told you that I worship God?'[22]

{14.11} | M said to him: 'And all the people; whom do they wor- 20a
ship?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'As for my friends and those who advocate the same as what I say, they worship God. As for the other nations, they differ; some of them worship stones, some of them the sun, some of them the moon, some of them the devils, some of them carved idols, like most of your people and those who are until now polytheists. And when God, may His name be glorified and may His remembrance be exalted, looked at the world He pitied them and had compassion for His creation and He sent the Prophets to convert His creation to the knowledge of God | and the worship of God'. 20b

{14.14} M said to him: 'I heard you mention Christ. Tell me who this Christ is'.

And he said to him: 'Christ is the Word of God and his Spirit'.[23]

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[21] Isa 6:3.

[22] For a discussion of the ways in which Baḥīrā explains his faith, see Ch. 4, pp. 104–113.

[23] The monk explains his faith in Qur'anic terms, echoing Q 4:171. See Ch. 4, pp. 106, 111–112.

{14.15} فقال له م المسيح نبي ام الاه .
قال[1] له بحيرا المسيح هو الاه وهو انسان .
{14.17} فقال له م كيف يكون هدا[2] .
فقال[3] له بحيرا لان الله بعث [4] جبراييل الملاك الي امراه طاهره عدري واصلها من نسل ابراهيم فحبلت بقول جبراييل من غير مباضعة رجل ولا زرع بشر وولدت وبقيه[5] عدري كما كانت فمكت[6] تلك الروح والكلمه في دلك الانسان المولود من مريم العدري فصار انه[7] انسان [8] .
{14.18} | فقال له م وكيف ولدت امراه عدراه بغير زرع وبقيت عدري علي 21a
حالها .
قال له بحيرا الم اقول لك ان روح الله نزل من السما ولبس جسدا لان جبراييل قال لهده الامراه ابشري ايتها العدري فان الرب معك مباركه انتي في النسا ومباركه هي ثمرة بطنك وانك ستلدين ابننا[9] ويدعي اسمه عمانوييل
فقالت من اين يكون لي دا وانا لم اعرف رجل قط فقال لها روح القدس | 21b
تحل بك والمولود منك ابن الله هو[10] يا م هو المسيح اياه اعبد وله اسجد لانه[11] كلمت الله وروحه متجسده من مريم العدري[12] .
{14.20} فقال له م فمتا طلع الي السما وكم اقام في الارض .
قال له بحيرا اما اقامته[13] في الارض فكان ثلاثين سنه في بلد يقال لها[14] البيت المقدس وعمل عجايب عظيمه واقام موتا[15] وفتح اعين عميان وابرا البكم
وطهر البرص واقام المقود وعمل اشياتا كثيره لا تحصا | وكان يعلم الناس 22a
تعليما حسنا ويبين لهم سنن غريبه[16] من اعمال البر وان اليهود الدين كانوا في البيت المقدس صلبوه علي يد رجل كان والي عليهم من قبل ملك اليونانين[17] .

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[1] i + ف U [2] قال له بحيرا المسيح هو الاه وانسان فقال له م كيف يكون هذا + U (ditt) [3] i < U [4] lege
U و + i lege [8] U الاه + lege [7] U ت + f [6] U ت f lege [5] U كلمته وروحه من السما علي يد +
U فقال له م فاين هو المسيح فقال له بحيرا هو في السما + lege [12] f < U [11] U هذه [10] U ابنا lege [9]
U اليونانين [17] U عربيه [16] U ي f [15] f < U [14] U م i lege [13]

{14.15} And M said to him: 'Is Christ a prophet or a god?'

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'Christ is God and man'.

{14.17} And M said to him: 'How can that be?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Because God sent his Word and his Spirit from heaven, at the hands of the angel Gabriel, to a virtuous virgin, whose origin was from the progeny of Abraham. She conceived without intercourse with a man and without the seed of a human, in accordance with the word of Gabriel. And she gave birth and she remained virgin as she was. And that Spirit and the Word abided in that man born from the Virgin Mary, and he became God and man'.

{14.18} | M said to him: 'And how can a virgin give birth without 21a
seed and remain a virgin like she was?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Do I not tell you that the Spirit of God descended from heaven and clothed himself with body, as Gabriel said to this woman: "Rejoice, o virgin, since the Lord is with you, blessed you are among the women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. You will give birth to a son and his name will be Emmanuel". And she said: "How will this happen to me, while I do not know a man at all?" And he said to her: "The Holy Spirit | will overshadow you and the one born from 21b
you will be the Son of God".[24] He, M, is Christ, him do I serve and him do I worship, because he is the Word of God and His Spirit, incarnate from the Virgin Mary.'

{14.19} And M said to him: 'And where is Christ?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'He is heaven'.

{14.20} And M said: 'And when did he ascend to heaven, and how long did he stay on earth?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'As for his stay on earth, he was thirty years in a town called Jerusalem and he worked great miracles. He raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind and healed the dumb, cleansed the lepers and made the lame stand up, and he did many, innumerable, things. | And he used to teach the people a good teaching and demon- 22a
strated to them the wondrous deeds of the works of piety, but the Jews who were in the Jerusalem crucified him, at the hands of a man who was ruler over them, before the reign of the Greeks'.

M said to him: 'Who are the Greeks?'

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[24] Cf. Luke 1:28–35, Matt 1:23.

فقال له م من هم اليونانيين .
قال له بحيرا هم الروم وجعلوه في قبر وقام بعد ثلاثه[1] ايام وصعد الي السماء وراوه صاعدا جماعة اليهود فكانوا قد اتتبعوه[2] وامنوا به وقبلوا تعليمه .
فقال له م نعم[3] ان هدا الامر عجيب[4] وامرا شنيع[5] وانك لقايل | مصدق 22b
القول فهل الامر عندك صحيح .
فقال له الم يبلغك ما فعلته باصحابك من الايات والعجايب .
فقال له م نعم .
فقال له انما فعلت دلك بقوة المسيح وباسمه .
{14.22} فقال له م فكيف تسجد لانسان صلبته اليهود .
فقال له بحيرا معاد الله ان اسجد لانسان بل انما سجودي لاله اتا ولبس ناسوت انسان نعم واعلم يا ميم[6] انه ياتي ويدين الاحيا والاموات يوم القيامه .
{14.24} فقال له م وما هي القيامه .
قال له | بحيرا ادا انقضت الدنيا وطويت السما والارض متل القرطاس 23a
وجلس الله علي منبره العظيم [7] وامر[8] ملايكته يجمعوا خلايقه يقيمهم عن يمينه ويساره واهل اليمين هم الصديقين الفايزين واهل اليسار هم الخاطيين المغضوب عليهم الضاالين .
فقال م يا بحيرا لقد جبتنا[9] بشيا فزيدنا منه .

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[1] ثلثه U [2] اتبعوه U [3] < U [4] ل + i U [5] شنع U [6] م U [7] المنيف U [8] i < U [9] جبت U

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'They are the 'Rūm'.[25] And they put him in the grave and he rose after three days and ascended to heaven, and a group of Jews saw him ascend, so they followed him and believed in him and accepted his teaching'.

And M said to him: 'Yes, this matter is astonishing and it is an abominable matter. You are indeed a trustworthy | speaker, so is this 22b
matter true according to you?'

And he said to him: 'Has the news not reached you about the signs and miracles that I worked in your companions?'

M said to him: 'Yes'.

He said to him: 'I did this with the power of Christ and in his name'.

{14.22} M said to him: 'How can you worship a man whom the Jews crucified?'.

Baḥīrā said to him: 'God forbid that I worship a human being! Nay, I worship God who came and clothed Himself with the human nature of man. Indeed, and know M that he will come and judge the living and the dead on the day of the resurrection.'

{14.24} M said to him: 'What is the resurrection?'.

Baḥīrā said | to him: 'That is when the world comes to an end, and 23a
heaven and earth will be rolled up like a scroll. God will sit down on His lofty pulpit and order the angels to collect His creatures and to place them on His right-hand and His left-hand sides. And the people on the right, they are the righteous, the triumphant. And the people on the left are the sinners, on whom wrath rests, those who are astray.'[26]

M said to him: 'Baḥīrā, you have already brought us something, so tell us more'.

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[25] Rather than saying that Christ was crucified when Jerusalem was ruled by the Romans, the redactor of the Legend has decided to refer to the period as the time before the Greeks (*al-Yūnāniyyīn*) who he explains are also called *Rūm*, i.e. Byzantines. In this manner the Legend avoids having to state that Christ was crucified under the *Rūm*, a term which can refer to the Romans as well. This passage suggests that this recension is Melkite, as one expects that Melkites in particular would want to avoid at all cost the suggestion that Christ was crucified under the Byzantines.

[26] This description of the sinners echoes Q 1:7. In the opening chapter of the Qur'an, the *Fātiḥa*, Muslims implore God to guide them to the straight path and not to count them with the sinners, who are also described as those 'on whom wrath rests, those who are astray'. Christian apologists took this as a sign that Muslims are seeking divine guidance because they are not guided yet and hence used the *Fātiḥa* against Muslims (see the discussion in Ch. 5, pp. 131–132). Similarly, in this passage the words of the Qur'an are appropriated in order to suggest that it is only the faith in Christ can save one from error.

فقال له بحيرا ان الدي عندي من مكتومات الاسرار من فوق ما عسا ان
ابوح به فلا تقطعني | فاني اليك[1] اتيا[2] باشيا عجيبه واعلم ان لولا بني عمك 23b
واهلك لكنت انا اسير[3] اليك لانك عظيما عندي وجليل في عيني وقلبي
ولست بمستحق ان تقبل الي ولكن دلك بفضلك .
فجازاه[4] م خيرا وتشكر له وعانقه وقبله بين عينيه وراسه .
{15} فقال م يا بحيرا ان كان ما تقوله حق فاسالني[5] ما شيت حتي اعطيك
اياه .
{15.1} فقال له بحيرا حاجتي اليك اصحابي المومنين بالمسيح وهم المعروفين
بالنصاري[6] .
فقال له م وهم اصحابك | . 24a
{15.2} قال له بحيرا هم قوم متواضعين وفيهم قسان ورهبان وشمامسه
يخافون الله ويومنون بالاخره لا يتعضمون ولا يستكبرون وهم يصلون
علي الصالحين والطالحين ويحبون اصدقاهم واعداهم وفيهم قوم متوحدين
يسكنون ديارات قد بنوها في البراري ولا يصاحبون النسا ولا يحبون
المكاسب {15.3} واعلم يا م انك ادا امنت اليهم فان الله يطول عمرك
وحيات اهل بيتك من بعدك ولا يقوم بين يديك | ملك الا وانت غالبه 24b
وقاهره {15.4} وليس لك مقاوم الا ملوك الروم فانهم يساووك في الحروب
والملك وفي اخر ملكك وملك ولدك تغلب الروم علي الارض كلها لانهم
يتوكلون علي الصليب وبه يحاربونك[7] .
{16} قال له م يا بحيرا كيف تامن بي اهل بيتي وبني عمي .
قال له بحيرا قد عرفتك ما تحتاج اليه وانا ايضا اعرفك وقوة الله تعضدك
لانه هو الله الدي نصبك لهدا الامر.
{16.1} قال له م ان بني عمي ان علموا ان | اصير عليهم ريسا احتالوا 25a
عليي[8] وعليك وقتلونا جميعا .

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[1] اتيك U [2] < U [3] اصير U [4] فجزاه U [5] فسالني U [6] f1 U [7] يحاربوكم U [8] f < U

Baḥīrā said to him: 'I have some more hidden mysteries from on high, which I may disclose, so do not stay away from me, | as I bring 23b
you marvelous things. Know that if it were not for your people and your relatives, I would come to you, because you are great and exalted in my eyes and my heart, and I do not deserve to receive you—that is only through your kindness.'

M wished him the best and thanked him, embracing him and kissing him between his eyes and on his head. {15} And M said: 'Baḥīrā, if what you say is true, then ask me whatever you like, and I will give it to you'.

{15.1} And Baḥīrā said to him: 'My request to you concerns my friends, the believers in Christ, who are known as Christians'.

And M said to him: 'And they are your friends?'.

{15.2} | Baḥīrā said to him: 'They are a humble people, and among 24a
them are priests and monks and deacons, who fear God and believe in the hereafter. They are not haughty and not proud, and they pray for the righteous and the wicked, they love their friends and their enemies, and among them there are hermits, who live in monasteries, which they have built in the deserts.[27] They do not have company of women, nor do they love earnings. {15.3} Know M that if you protect them, God will lengthen your life and the life of your relatives after you. And no king will rise | against you or you will defeat him and gain victory 24b
over him. {15.4} And no one will withstand you except the kings of the Romans, as they will be your equal in wars and dominion. And at the end of your reign and the reign of your descendents, the Romans will triumph over the whole earth, because they trust in the cross, and with it they will combat you.'

{16} M said to him: 'Baḥīrā, how will my relatives and my people believe in me?'.

Baḥīrā said to him: 'I have taught you what you need, and I will teach you more, and God's power will help you, because it is God who appointed you for this affair'.

{16.1} Then M said to him: 'My relatives, when they know that | I 25a
will become a ruler over them, they will trick me and you and they will kill both of us'.

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[27] The monk's words echo Q 5:82; for the importance of this verse to the Legend and Christian apologetics vis-à-vis Islam in general, see: above: Ch. 4, pp. 113–121.

{16.2} قال له بحيرا اما[1] قد قلت لك انك تكون تجي الي بالليل ولا يراك احدا وانا اكون افهمك ما تقوله لهم .
{16.3} قال له م ان قالوا[2] لي من اين لك هدا العلم مادا اقول[3] لهم .
قال له بحيرا اقول لهم ان جبراييل ريس الملايكه جاء الي وهو يعلمني .
{16.4} فقال له م فادا اوصفت[4] لهم الاخره[5] الدي تقول وسالوني عنها فمادا
اقول لهم قال له بحيرا قول لهم فيها جنات | النعيم والاشجار والخيرات 25b
الكثيره وكلما تشتهيه نفوسكم
{16.5} فان قالوا[6] لي بعد ناكل ونشرب[7] فمادا اقول لهم .
فلما قال هدا طرق بحيرا راسه الي[8] الارض ثم قال قول لهم انكم تاكلون وتشربون وتفرحون وان[9] في الجنة انهار اربعة احدهما شراب والاخر لبن والاخر عسل والاخر ماء .
{16.7} قال له فادا قلت لهم هدا وقالوا لي ناكل ونشرب ونفرح ولا نتزوج مادا اقول لهم .
قال له بحيرا ان هدا الكلام | صعب جدا غير انه يجب ان تعطيهم حسب 26a
طاقتهم وما تحتمله عقولهم كالصبي الدي يرضع اولا ثم يفطم ويطعم طعاما لينا ثم يتصاعد به من شي الي شي حتي يكمل نعم يا م قول لهم لن في الجنه[10] حوريات[11] حسان المنظر[12] يعطا الرجل منهم[13] .
{16.8} نعم وواجبا عليهم صياما دايما .
قال له انهم لا يستطيعون[14] صياما .

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[1] i < U [2] f < U [3] i < U [4] i < U [5] الاحيره U [6] f < U [7] فيها + U [8] i ع U [9] i ف U [10] < U
[11] حور العيون U [12] المناظر U [13] lege + سبعة U [14] f ا U

{16.2} Baḥīrā said to him: 'Have I not told you that you will come to me at night, when nobody sees you? And I will explain to you what you should say to them.'

{16.3} M said to him: 'If they say to me: "From where do you have this knowledge?", what shall I say to them?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Say to them: "Gabriel the archangel has come to me and he has instructed me".'

{16.4} And M said to him: 'And if I describe the hereafter to them, which you have mentioned, and they ask me about it, what shall I say to them?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Say to them "there are gardens | of pleasure in 25b
it, and trees and many good things and all that your souls desire".'

{16.5} 'And if they say to me "after we eat and drink there" what do I say to them?'[28]

And when he said this, Baḥīrā bowed his head to the ground. Then he said: 'Say to them: "You will eat and drink and rejoice. And there are four rivers in paradise, one of wine, another of milk, another of honey and another of water".'

{16.7} And he said to him: 'And if I say this to them, they will say to me: "We eat and drink and rejoice, but we do not marry"; then what do I say to them?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'These words are | very difficult, but it is neces- 26a
sary that you grant them things according to their aptitude and what their minds can bear; like a boy who is first suckled, then weaned, then eats tender food and then gets more, bit by bit, until he becomes mature.[29] Yes, M, say to them: "In paradise there are houris with beautiful looks, seven of whom are given to men". {16.8} Yes, and it is incumbent on them to fast continuously.'

And he said: 'They are not capable of fasting'.

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[28] Part of the hypothetical question is missing. Comparison with ES and WS shows that probably {16.5} and {16.6} have been conflated.

[29] Infants, who need soft food because they are not mature enough to absorb solid food, are an old metaphor for the Jews. See for example how it features in Jacob of Sarug's 'On the Advent of the Messiah' (Albert, *Jacques de Saroug*, pp. 122–123, 176–177, 192–193 (ttr)). Christians also used it to refer to Muslims, on account of their strict monotheism. In one apologetic treatise they are described as even more childish than the Jews, in need of 'a milk that is weaker and thinner' (Van Roey, *Nonnus de Nisibe*, p. 34*; see the discussion in: Griffith, 'The Apologetic Treatise', p. 134).

{16.9} قال له قول لهم يصومون شهر ثلاثين يوم لا ياكلون فيه زفرا .
فقال هم معتادين | لاكل اللحم واخاف لا يقبلون دلك مني . 26b
قال له بحيرا قد قلت لك تسوقهم بالملاطفه واطلق الاكل والشرب والنكاح وادا افطروا لايزالوا ياكلون حتي يقرب الصباح[1] .
{16.10} فقال له م فان قالوا[2] الي مادا نحفض نفوسنا ومادا اتطلق لنا فهادا اقول لهم .
قال له بحيرا انهاهم عن شرب الخمر فانهم متي سكروا قسيت[3] قلوبهم وانهاهم عن اكل لحم الخنزير لانه يزيد في الغلبه | ويقسي القلب وهو 27a معدوم عندكم وانهاهم عن اكل الميته والدم وعن شهادة الزور وعن الزنا والسرقه والخطف[4] والظلم واوصيهم بالايتام والارامل واكرام والديهم .
{16.12} قال له م وكم مره يصلون لله في النهار .
فقال له بحيرا سبع صلوات كما قال داوود النبي .
فقال له م ومن هو داوود .
قال له بحيرا نبي الله هو داوود وقال سبع مرار اصلي لك يا رب ولكن افرض | عليهم خمسه في النهار وتنتين في الليل {16.13} واجعل لهم يوم في 27b الجمعه للبطاله والراحه .
قال له م واي يوم اجعله .

[1] الصبح U [2] f < U [3] قست U [4] from here onwards U misses an entire leaf.

{16.9} And he said to him: 'Say to them that they shall fast a month of thirty days during which they shall not eat food that contains fat'.

And he said: 'They are used to | eating meat and I fear that they 26b
will not accept that from me'.

Baḥīrā said to him: 'I told you that you should guide them gently, so let them eat and drink and cohabit. And when they break the fast they can continue eating until the morning comes.'

{16.10} And M said: 'And if they say to me: "From what should we abstain and what is allowed to us?"', what do I say to them?'.

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Forbid them to drink wine, because when they get drunk their hearts will harden. And forbid them to eat pork, because it increases idle talk | and it hardens the heart and it is absent 27a
with you.[30] And forbid them to eat carrion and blood, and false testimony and adultery and stealing and rape and iniquity and enjoin on them |the care of| orphans and widows and respect for their parents.'

{16.12} M said to him: 'And how many times per day should they pray to God?'

And Baḥīrā said to him: 'Seven prayers, as the prophet David has said'.

M said to him: 'Who is he, David?'

Baḥīrā said to him: 'David is a Prophet of God and he said: "Seven times I pray to You, o Lord".[31] But impose | on them five times per day 27b
and two per night.[32] {16.13} And create for them a day per week for inactivity and rest.'

M said to him: 'And which day shall I make it?'

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[30] This is the only recension that explains the Muslim prohibition of eating pork; this awkward explanation probably reflects the explanation given by Pseudo-al-Kindī as to why the Jews are not allowed to eat pork; he claims that they have a tendency to make idols of the things they like, so God wants to prevent them from making pig idols (Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 100–102 (t); Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, 210–212 (tr)). 'Hardening of the heart' is of course a term used by Christians for those who lack the capacity to open their heart to the divine mysteries, and is used in reference to both the Jews and the Muslims; on the basis of this expression being used here, I presume the monk's explanation is meant as an insinuation that the idolatrous Arabs needed to be protected from anything that can reduce further that propensity to recognize the divine truths, rather than as a concern about the health of Muḥammad's followers, although the subsequent explanation 'it is absent with you' is rather down-to-earth.

[31] Cf. Ps. 119:164.

[32] See below A2, pp. 475–477, where the redactor attempts to demonstrate that the prayers in Islam are seven, not five.

قال له بحيرا اجعله يوم الجمعه لان في يوم الجمعه يقبلون قولك وفيه يقع الاستفتاح منك وفيه يظهر فيهم ما ترسم وان تجتمعوا فيه حتي تكون صلاتهم واحده في موضع واحد .
{16.14} فقال له م فانهم قالوا اتينا بعلامه وشهاده نصدقك بها ونتحقق
28a كلامك | مادا اقول لهم .
فقال له بحيرا انا اكتب لك كتاب بكلما تريد واجعله علي قرن البقره واجلس انت حيث تكون تجلس وانا احتال بتلميدي حتي يصير بها الي موضعا تدخل فيه الي مجمعهم حيث تكون قاعد ويكون دلك يوم الجمعه وادهب انت واجمع بني عمك وقول لهم انه ينزل علي الوحي يوم الجمعه قال له بحيرا ادا
28b رايت البقره قد اقبلت فقوم مبادرا وامضي | خلفها وخد الكتاب وقول هده كتاب رب العالمين وما استطاعت الارض ان تقبله فقبلته هده البقره .
{16.16} وكان م شاب متواضع منبسطا سليم الصدر دكيا محبا للعلم وكان يقبل علم بحيرا و يحفظيه ويقبل عليه نهارا وليلا الي يوم الدي كتب فيه القرااان {16.17} ولم يزال يتردد الي عند بحيرا ويشاوره في اموره ويعمل
29a بقوله وكان بتردد اليه كل يوم ولم يزال علي دلك | مواضب الي ان مات بحيرا .

فلما كان بعض الليالي سار م الي القلايه وانبهني اد كنت نايم وجلس عندي وجعل يبكي علي المعلم ويحلفني ان لا اعلم احدا بشي من دلك .
{17} وكان المعلم يقول لي يا ابني انه سيكون في ايام ولد اسماعيل شدايد كثيره وبلايا عظيمه وفزعا وموت ودما في بلد وبلد وتظهر نيران في السما واراقت دما كثير {17.1} وتنقلب الارض علي سكانها وتتم فيه

Baḥīrā said to him: 'Make it Friday, because on Friday they will receive your teaching, on that day your mission will commence and on that day |your laws| will appear amongst them. You should congregate on it so that they will be united in prayer in one place'.[33]

{16.14} And M said to him: 'And if they say "give us a sign and testimony by which we can believe in you, so that we may know that your words are true" | what shall I say to them?' 28a

Baḥīrā said to him: 'I will write a book for you containing all you want and I will put it on the horn of a cow. And you should sit down wherever you sit down and I will use a trick with my pupil, in that he will go with her to a place from where she will go to their gathering place, while you will be sitting there, and that will be on Friday, and you go and gather your folk together and say to them: "Revelation will descend upon me on Friday".' Baḥīrā said to him: 'when you see the cow approaching, stand up immediately and go | after her, take the 28b book and say: "This is the Book from the Lord of all Being.[34] The earth was not able to receive it, so this cow received it".'

{16.16} M was a humble simple boy, good-natured, bright and eager to learn. He received knowledge from Baḥīrā, memorized it and devoted himself to it day and night, until the day that the Qur'an was written. {16.17} He continued to visit Baḥīrā frequently and to consult him about his affairs and to do what he said. And he visited him every day and he continued that consistently | until Baḥīrā died. 29a

On a certain night M went to the cell and woke me up, because I was sleeping. And he sat with me and began to weep about his teacher and he made me swear that I would not tell anyone anything about that. {17} And the teacher used to say to me: 'My son, in the days of the Sons of Ishmael there will be many hardships and great tribulations and anxiety and death and blood in every place.[35] There will be fires appearing in the sky and much bloodshed {17.1} and the world will be

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[33] The redactor is playing with the literal meaning of Friday, 'day of congregation', suggesting that this name goes back to the gathering of the Arabs to receive the book from the cow. See also A2, p. 485, n. 90, for the question of worship on Friday in Islam. The words 'your laws' replace 'what you will prescribe' in the translation, for the sake of readability.

[34] Cf. Q 1:2.

[35] The prophecies of the monk that appear in this section form a more elaborate version of the vision described in {3}. For the identification of the individual figures, see above Ch. 3.

29b نبوة | داوود اد يقول تكون بيوتهم قبورهم الي الابد .
{17.3} واعلم يا بني ان في سنة الف وخمسه وخمسين من سنين الاسكندر يخرج فيلبس ملك الروم ويقتل من بني اسماعيل ملكا عظيم من ملوكهم ويحدث بعده اشياتا كثيره الواحد سبعة اضعاف {17.4} وفي تلك السنه تتم كلمة الله التي قالها لاسماعيل اثني عشر ملك يولد منك وايضا اثني عشر
30a ملكا يخرجون من صلبك | .
{17.7} ثم ملك اسماعيل يوخد ويعطا لابنه الاصغر واثنا عشر ملك يكونون مسلطين علي الارض[1] كلها من صلبه {17.10} الويل للعالم الدي يملكه بني هاشم {17.11} وهم الدين يقال لهم الطير المظلم وهم العصاه الدين يدين الله بهم العالم عصاه الرجز {17.12} وهو التي سماها اشعيا[2] النبي الاندراس[3] شبه
30b البقر تكون سيره بني هاشم علي الارض {17.13} وسماها ايضا المتعظمين | المتجبرين {17.14} وان شعور روسهم تكون متل النار {17.15} وتكون في ايامهم مضاجعه الدكور للدكور فاشيا[4] طاهره {17.16} ولا يانقون[5] من شيا {17.17} ويختلطون بغير جنسهم {17.19} وتراق دما الناس في ايامهم مثل الالبان {17.21} ويباعون الاحرار بنيهم {17.22} ويملكون الاحرار والحراير {17.26} ويعظم شرهم في العالم ولا يعدون الناس في اعينهم بشي[6] {17.28} ويجذبون مداين الملوك القديمه ويبنوا الي انفسهم مداين
31a جديده {17.30} وكل | كرامتهم وخيراتهم في ⸢الارض ببابل[7] وفي ارض اللنعانيين[8] {17.31} ويعظم افتخارهم {17.32} ويساق الي الارض[9] الملوك في سلاسل الحديد ويشخص اليها ريسا الناس في الاغلال والقيود {17.33} ويخضع لبابل جميع مدن الملوك {17.34} ويطلبون الخراج[10] {17.35} ويمتلي

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[1] continuation of U [2] i < U [3] الانذرس U الاتدرس؟| [4] ب i U [5] يانفون U [6] i < U [7] lege ⸢ U الحوايج[10] U ارض[9] U الكنعانيين lege[8] U ارض بابل

overturned upon its inhabitants. In it the prophecy of | David will be 29b
fulfilled, as he said: 'Their houses will be their graves forever'.[36] {17.3}
And know, my son, that in the year 1055 from the years of Alexander,
Philip, king of the Romans, will go out and kill one of the mighty kings
from the Sons of Ishmael.[37] And after that many things will happen,
sevenfold. {17.4} And in that year the word of God which he spoke to
Ishmael will be fulfilled: "Twelve kings will be brought forth from you"
and also: "Twelve kings will go out from your loins".[38]

{17.7} | Then the reign of Ishmael will be taken and given to his 30a
youngest son and twelve kings will rule over the earth, all from his
loins. {17.10} Woe to the world that is ruled by the Sons of Hāshim.
{17.11} They are the ones who are called 'the dark birds' and they
are the rod with whom God requites the world, the rod of chastise-
ment.[39] {17.12} This is the one whom the prophet Isaiah called: the
[Assyrian].[40] Like cows the Sons of Hāshim will pass over the earth.[41]
{17.13} He also called them the haughty, | the proud, {17.14} and 30b
the hairs of their heads will be like fire. {17.15} And in their days
men will have intercourse with each other and other blatant things
will occur. {17.16} They will not shrink from anything. {17.17} and
they will mingle with the opposite sex.[42] {17.19} The blood of peo-
ple will flow like milk in their days. {17.21} Free men will sell their
sons {17.22} and they will take possession of free men and women.
{17.26} Their evil will be great in the world and the people will not
count for anything in their eyes. {17.28} And they will tear down
the cities of the ancient kings and build new cities for themselves.
{17.30} All | their honor and their treasures will be in the land of 31a
Babel and in the land of the Canaanites. {17.31} Their pride will
become great {17.32} and the kings will be led to the land in iron
chains and the nobles of the people will be sent to it in fetters and
shackles.[43] {17.33} And all the cities of the kings will be subdued to
Babel. {17.34} And they will demand the *kharāj*. {17.35} The earth will

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[36] Psa 49:11–12.

[37] Cf. the more logical reading in other recensions: 'And in the year 1055 of Alexander, son of Philip, the Arabs will rise and kill their king'.

[38] Cf. Gen 17:20.

[39] Cf. Isa 10:5 and Isa 46:11.

[40] Name emendated on the basis of the other recensions and Isa 10:5.

[41] The comparison with cows is strange; perhaps it is based on {3.14}.

[42] Perhaps: mingle with other races (*bi-ghayr jinsihim*).

[43] * Psa 149:8.

الارض من بني اسماعيل واتباعهم من اربع اقطار الارض[1] {17.36} ويكونوا
في الارض متل الجراد {17.37} فاما بابل فانها تخرب في دلك الزمان {17.38}
وتبطل فيها | حكمة الحكما {17.39} ويجرا[2] فيها كلام الاشرار واعمالهم 31b
{17.40} وترتفع الرحمه من قلوب الناس {17.41} ويملكون[3] العبيد والغربا
فاما الاحرار والاشراف فيذلوا {17.42} ويظفر الشباب بالمشايخ .
{17.68} وتكون ايام المهدي ابن فاطمه فيها خلاص وسلامه كثيره لم يكن
متلها وقد يحفظ م ابنه وبنته من بعده {17.69} واعلموا[4] انه يكون م اول
ملوك العرب واخر ملك يكون اسمه م ايضا لانه معلوم انه يكون | م اول 32a
وم اخر الدي به يكون منتها حكمهم وهو تمام اربعه وعشرون ملك .
{17.71} ثم من بعد دلك تخرج يني سفيان لابسين لباس الدم ويطردون بني
اسماعيل الي جبل اترب[5] {17.72} ويقتلون الرجال والنسا والصبيان عند دلك
بغير شفقه .
{17.73} وياتي من المغرب[6] الدي[7] هم صفرانا المغربي[8] ويدخلون ارض الموعد
وياتون الي الشام {17.74} وينكسرون من الاسد وهو المهدي ابن | ابن[9] 32b
عاشه {17.76} ويكون غضبه وحرده علي بني اسماعيل[10] اسراييل والنصارى
ايضا {17.78} ويهدم الكنايس والديارة ويخرب المدابح {17.79} وتكون شدة
عظيمه لم يكون في العالم متلها والدين يموتون من الجوع اكثر من الدين
يقتلون بالسيف {17.80} وكثرين منهم يكونوا من اولاد الكنيسه يظلون
ويتبعون الشيطان {17.83} وفي تلك الايام يقولون الناس للجبال اقعي علينا
والاكام غطينا من كثرة الشدايد والاحزان | والجوع والهلاك {17.93} وادا 33a
كان هدا اعلموا[11] ان قد دنا خراب الدنيا باسرها وهلاك كل من عليها .

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[1] الدنيا U [2] f < U [3] f ا U [4] f < U [5] ثيرب U [6] العرب U [7] f + ن U [8] المعربي U [9] lege < U (ditt) [10] lege < U [11] f < U

be full of Sons of Ishmael and their followers, from the four corners of the world {17.36} and they will be in the land like locust. {17.37} As for Babel, it will be destroyed in that time. {17.38} And the wisdom of the wise | will cease in it {17.39} and the talk and the deeds of the wicked 31b will flow in it. {17.40} Mercy will be lifted from the hearts of the people. {17.41} Slaves and strangers will rule. Free men and noblemen will be subdued, {17.42} and youngsters will overpower the old.

{17.68} And in the days of Mahdī ibn Fāṭima there will be deliverance and great peace the like of which never was, as M protects his son and his daughter after him. {17.69} And know that M will be the first of the kings of the Arabs and the last king will have the name M as well, because it is known that there will be | a first M and a last M, at the 32a time of whom the end of their rule will be, and that is the completion of twenty-four kings.

{17.71} Then after that, the Sons of Sufyān will go out, dressed in clothes of blood. And they will chase the Sons of Ishmael to the mountain of Yathrib {17.72} and they will kill men and women and children without compassion at that time.

{17.73} And from the West those who are the [yearling goats] will come and they will enter the promised land and they will come to Syria.[44]

{17.74} And they will be defeated by the lion who is Mahdī | ibn 32b ʿĀ'isha. {17.76} His anger and fury will be against the Sons of Israel and the Christians as well. {17.78} And he will destroy churches and monasteries and tear down the altars. {17.79} And there will be great distress, as was never before in the world. And those who die from famine are more than those killed by the sword. {17.80} Many of them will be from the sons of the church. They will go astray and follow the devil. {17.83} And in those days the people will say to the mountains: 'Fall upon us!', and 'may the hills cover us' from the amount of hardships and sorrows | and hunger and destruction.[45] 33a {17.93} And when this comes to pass, know that the destruction of the entire world and the perdition of those who are on it has drawn near.

[44] For this erroneous translation of the Syriac term 'yearling goat', see above, p. 383, n. 11.

[45] * Luke 23:30, cf. Hos. 10:8.

{17.94} وعند دلك ياتي الملك الدي هو لابس الاخضر فيكون في الدنيا صلاح عظيم وطيبتا لم يكن متلها وتبني[1] البيع ويظهر الحق ⸢ويزول الباطل[2] ويزول ملك بني اسماعيل {17.101} وتملك الروم الارض سابوعا واحد ونصف سابوع {17.103} وحنيدا[3] ترتج رياح السما وتقوم ملوك بعضهم علي بعض {17.107} وبعد | دلك يخرج ياجوج وماجوج شبه الكلاب الخاطفه 33b {17.108} فيفعلون كل الشرور علي الارض {17.109} حنيدا يخرج ابن الهلاك متل التنين فيبلع الكل بلا رحمه في ساعة واحده {17.110} يجمعهم الله الي مجمع واحد ويبعث عليهم ملوك[4] رجز فيقتلونهم عن اخرهم في ساعتا واحده عند دلك يكون عند القديسين فرحا عظيم لايبطل الي الابد وعند الخطاه عداب وبكاء وصرير الاسنان دايما .

{18} | انا مرهب الخاطي اقمت في الدير مع بحيرا الراهب مده طويله 34a {18.1} وحدثني ووصف هده الاشيا كلها وهدا الخبر جميعه رايته وشهدت به وبامره كتبته .

{18.2} وقال لي لا تلزمني[5] يا اخي ولا يلزمني[6] احدا من النصاري المومنين بسيدنا ايسوع المسيح الدين يقفون علي هدا[7] الكتاب فيما ولفته ووضعته .

{18.3} ثم قال لي يا[8] مرهب اخي[9] بعد ان فرغ من كلامه وما قد تنبا به ثم تنبا طويلا وتنهد وبكاء[10] بكاء | مرا {18.4} لاجل فعله هده الخطيه العظيمه 34b والبدعه والزله وكونه تجرا علي الله وعمل ما لم يامره الله به {18.5} وقال الويل لي من الله لكوني كدبت وشهدت بالزور

{18.6} فقلت له ان الله رووف بعبيده .

{18.7} فقال لي يا راهب[11] انا اعلم انني جلبت هدا علي نفسي لاجل دنوبي وكثرة خطاياي [12] وقبح فعلي .

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[1] f ا U [2] ⸢ < U [3] وحينيدا U [4] lege ملاك (cf. other recensions) [5] تلومتي U [6] يلومتي U [7] < U
[8] اخي U [9] < U [10] lege f < [11] ابي مرهب U [12] اثامي U

{17.94} And then the king will come who is dressed in green and there will be great well-being and goodness in the world, the like of which never was. Churches will be built and the truth will become manifest and falsity will cease to be. And the reign of the Sons of Ishmael will come to an end {17.101} and the Romans will rule the earth for one great week and a half. {17.103} Then the winds of heaven will be convulsed and kings will stand up against each other. {17.107} After that | Gog and Magog will go out, like rapacious dogs, {17.108} 33b
and do all evil things on earth. {17.109} Then the Son of Perdition will go out, in the likeness of a dragon, and he will swallow all without mercy in one hour. {17.110} God will gather them to one place and send to them [angel] of wrath and he will kill them in their entirety in one hour. Then there will be with the holy great endless rejoicing forever, and with the sinners torment and weeping and gnashing of teeth everlastingly.'

{18} | I, Marhab the sinner, stayed in the monastery with the monk 34a
Baḥīrā for a long time.[46] {18.1} And he told and described all these matters to me. I took notice and was witness to this whole history and at his command I wrote it down.

{18.2} And he said to me: 'Do not reproach me, my brother, neither you nor any of the Christians, the believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, who find this book, for what I composed and set down'.

{18.3} Then he said to me: 'My brother Marhab', after he had finished his discourse and what he had prophesied. Then he prophesied for a long time and sighed and wept | bitterly, {18.4} for having com- 34b
mitted this grave sin, this heretical invention, this error and for having ventured against God and doing what God had not commanded.

{18.5} And he said: 'Woe to me, from God, for having lied and witnessed falsely'.

{18.6} I said: 'God is merciful to His servants'.

{18.7} And he said to me: 'O monk, I know that I have brought this upon myself on account of my sins, my many transgressions and the ugliness of my actions.

[46] This is the first time that the name Marhab occurs, which reflects that the text is a hybrid that first runs parallel to the two Syriac recensions, but then continues with an earlier version of A2 from {17.68} onwards. See for this: Ch. 8, pp. 214–215.

{18.8} وانا اعلمهم واتحقق ان لابد ما يقع هدا الكتاب[1] ويصير لهم به
حجه علي اعدايهم | وكل من يناصبهم مثل السيف القاطع وتقوا به نواميس 35a
كتابهم {18.9} وانا اعلم ان اكثرهم يلوموني علي عملي لاني اسست لهم
اعدا وقويتهم الي حين فناء دولتهم دولة العرب {18.10} وسوف يلحقهم
منهم الدل والهوان والافترا ويحملوهم مالاهم[2] طاقته[3] به ويضعفوا حوالهم[4]
ويمقتوهم ويهينوهم .
{18.11} وانا قبل ما رايت {18.12} الرويا بطور سينا لما[5] وصفته في بدو كتابي
هدا وامرت بها | فعلته من امر الملوك الدي مضيت اليهم ملك الروم وملك 35b
الفرس .
{18.13} ويا ابي مرهب اكتب عني تمام خطيتي بها قد وصفته في هدا الكتاب
الدي جعلته يشهد لي[6] بالنبوه والرساله {18.14} وما قد ندمت عليه لانني
افتريت وتجريت علي الله وشهدت بالمحال وتجريت علي الاهي ايسوع المسيح
له الحمد {18.15} وقويت من يعاند عبيد المسيح ويفتري علي روح القدس | 36a
ويجحدون لاهوت المسيح وانا اعلم اني مدان من اجل دلك كثيرا {18.16}
وقد اجتهدت واحرفت[7] بان يعترف باسم الاب والابن والروح القدس
{18.17} ما قدرت فما اطاعني ودلك من عظم خطيتي وجرمه وجرمي
جريي[8] علي الله تعالي دكره {18.19} واما اخطيت لكوني اثبت له النبوة
الكادبه وجعلت له كتاب ويشهد[9] له برساله[10] ونزل الوحي عليه {18.20}
لدالك انه ليتم بالحقيقه قول سيدنا | ايسوع المسيح في الانجيل المقدس انه 36b
سياتيكم انبيا كدبه ⸢فا الويل[11] لمن يتبعهم .

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[1] lege + في يد كتير من النصاري (cf. A2) [2] lege ما لا لهم U [3] lege f < U [4] lege i + ا [5] lege i ك
U [6] lege f ه وجرمت [7] U, lege? حرصت (cf. A2) [8] lege i + ت U [9] U وشهدت [10] U بالرساله
U [11] ⸢ فالويل

{18.8} I know and I am certain that this book will inevitably fall [into the hands of many Christians], and it will become for them a proof against their enemies | and everyone that is hostile to them like a 35a
cutting sword. They consolidate the laws of their book with it.[47] {18.9} I know that most of them will reproach me for my deed, because I set up enemies to them and I made them powerful until the time when their power, the power of the Arabs, disappears. {18.10} Through them, they will be overcome by humiliation and degradation and defamation. They will burden them with what they cannot bear, and they will weaken their positions and they will hate them and disdain them.

{18.11} Before I saw […][48] {18.12} the vision at Mount Sinai, as I described in the beginning of this book of mine, and I was entrusted with what | I did as regards the affair of the kings to whom I went, the 35b
King of the Romans and the King of Persia.

{18.13} Father Marhab, write, on my behalf, the entirety of my sin, regarding what I have described in this book, which I made to contain testimony of prophethood and apostleship for him, {18.14} and regarding that for which I have repented, because of having slandered and ventured against God. I testified to the absurd and ventured against my God Jesus Christ, praise be to Him, {18.15} and I gave power to those who oppose the servants of Christ and invent lies about the Holy Spirit, | as they deny the divine nature of Christ. I know that I 36a
am very guilty because of this, {18.16} but I tried hard and I [strove] to make him acknowledge the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, {18.17} as much as I could. But he did not obey me and that is my greatest sin, his crime and my crime, and my venturing against God, exalted is His name. {18.19} I sinned by establishing false prophethood for him. I made for him a book which testifies for him to apostleship and revelation. {18.20} This was in order that the saying of our Lord | Jesus Christ in the holy Gospel 'There will come to you 36b
false prophets. Woe to the one who follows them' would be fulfilled.[49]

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[47] I am not sure about the meaning of this sentence.

[48] The text has probably lost a number of lines due to homoioteleuton. A2 has: 'Before I saw this vision, which I saw at Mount Sinai, I studied all the books with prophecies of the prophets and the Torah and the things described by the learned regarding astrology on the basis of the conjunctions and rules of the stars and what it indicated about the reign of the Sons of Ishmael, who are the worst of all people, and what God Almighty imposed on his servants. {18.12} After that I saw the vision on Mount Sinai, which I have expounded in this book of mine.'

[49] * Matt. 24:11.

{18.21} وقد جعلت هدا الكتاب بدكر الاهوت والناسوت وام النور
الطاهره مريم العدري وحققت جميع العجايب التي صنعها ربنا ايسوع
المسيح له المجد والدة[1] فيه اللعنه والجزي علي اليهود وقربت النصاري[2]
{18.22} وقدمت الوصيه عليهم وعلي جماعة الرهبان وحملت عنهم تقل
الجزيه والخراج | والتنكد والزمته بان يجل الرهبان ولا يهينهم . 37a
{18.23} وان بعد دلك بايام اتا الي داكرا ان اصحابه مالوا الي عبادة الاصنام
ليتم قول السيد في انجيله المقدس انه لا يستطيع انه ياتي الي الا من اجتدبه
الاب الدي في السما .
{18.24} وانني كتبت له هدا الصوره ايه[3] وهو بجرمي وخطيتي وتمام بليتي
الدي جعلت الله مثل اصنامهم الحجاره وقلت في الكتاب | قل ⸢الله هو[4] 37b
احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفو احد واوصيته بان يقول
لهم قد نزلت علي هده الصوره {18.25} وهو بعظم خطيتي جعلت الله تعالي
صنم مثل اصنامهم فرد صمد لا يسمع ولا يبصر كالحجر وما عملت دلك
الا عند انقطاع الرجاء فيه .
{18.26} ثم كتبت له ياعيسي ابن مريم انت قلت للناس اتخدوني ولامي ⸢الا
بعين[5] من دون الله قال سبحانك ما لي ان اقول | ما ليس لي بحق ان قلته 38a
قد علمته فعلم ما في نفسي ولا اعلم ما في نفسك انك انت علام الغيوب
وجعلت هده ردا عليهم وتوبيخا لهم .

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[1] lege واكدت U [2] lege + اليه U [3] lege ايضا U [4] ⸢⸣ ~ U [5] ⸢⸣ lege: الاهين U

{18.21} And I made mention in this book of the Divinity and humanity, the virtuous Mother of Light, the Virgin Mary, and I confirmed all the miracles that our Lord Jesus Christ, praise be to him, worked. And I affirmed in it the curse on the Jews and their punishment, and I brought the Christians close to him, {18.22} and provided a directive concerning them and all the monks and I relieved them from the burden of the *jizya* and the *kharāj* | and the hardship. I com- 37a
pelled him to honor the monks and not to humiliate them.[50]

{18.23} Then he came to me after some days, mentioning that his companions inclined toward the worship of idols, so that the word of the Lord in his Holy Gospel 'no one can come to me unless the Father who is in heaven draws him' would be fulfilled.[51]

{18.24} And I also wrote the following sūra for him, and this is my crime, my sin and my utter misfortune that I made God like their idols of stone, as I said in the book: | '*Say: He is God, the One, the Everlasting* 37b
*God. He begets not nor is He begotten and there is no one like unto Him*'.[52] And I instructed him to say to them: 'This sūra has been revealed to me', and {18.25} this is the greatest of my sins; I made God, the exalted, an idol like their idols, solitary, solid, not hearing or seeing, like a stone. I did not do this until all my hope in him had been dashed.[53]

{18.26} Then I wrote for him: *'Jesus son of Mary, did you say to the people "take me and my mother as two gods, next to God"? He said: "Praise be to You. I do not say | that to which I have no right. If I had said it You would have known* 38a
*it. You know what is in me and I do not know what is in You. Praise be to You. You are the Knower of the mysteries"'*.[54] I wrote this in reply to them and as a reproach to them.[55]

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[50] See Ch. 4, pp. 114–121, for the issue of protection and tax exemption for monks.
[51] * John 6:44.
[52] Q 112.
[53] For an explanation of this verse, see A2, p. 513, n. 134.
[54] Q 5:116.
[55] For an explanation of this verse, see A2, p. 513, n. 136.

{18.27} فكتبت في هدا الكتاب في اوله وفي اخره {18.28} وان عيسي قال ما قلته لهم الا ما امرتني به ان يعبدون الله ربي وربكم .

{18.29} وكتبت له ايضا[1] نومن بما انزل عليك[2] وما انزل من قبلك واعنيت بدلك الانجيل المقدس وانه هو الحق الدي نزل[3] من | قلبه[4] وان الدي 38b اعلمته اياه باطل لانني رجل خاطي مدنب كداب .

{18.30} قال مرهب الراهب فلما قال بحيرا دلك جميعه ابتدا يبكي وينوح ويضرب علي صدره نادما علي خطيته وانا اصبره واسكته واقول له ان الله غفور ورحوم .

{18.31} فقال لي يا اخي مرهب كل الناس اخطوا ولا مثل خطييتي[5] انا ليس لدنبي مغفره .

{18.32} لاني كتبت بهواي ما اشتهته نفسي الخاطي | {18.33} وكنت قد 39a خرجت من دياري وصرت الي هده البرية القفره[6] المستوحشه حتي اكتتب[7] فيها هدا الامر العظيم وهو بضد الرهبان لان الرهبان يسكنوا البراري المستوحشه لتمحا خطاياهم ويتزايد برهم الا انا الكايب قد تضاعفت خطيتي وتزايد جرمي وصرت عدوا لروح القدس وكدبت الله سبحانه وانشهدت[8] بالكدب .

{18.34} واعترفت اني قد زرعت | الزيوان[9] في الحنطه لما[10] قد دكر في 39b الانجيل المقدس وهاولاي [11]العرب هم الزيوان[12] وقد زرعتهم في وسط بني المعموديه فبالحقيقه قد صرت عدوا لروح القدس و ظللت مثل الخروف الظال[13] لاجل خطيتي التي فعلتها فبالحقيقه قد اعددت لي نارا لا تطفا لكوني فتحت باب القبح[14] والشنيع[15] وجدفت علي الاب والابن والروح القدس لاني جعلت الباطل حق وقهرت | الحق . 40a

{18.35} والقيت علي خراف المسيح دياب ناهشه ونسور خاطفه وافاعي تلدعوهم[16] وسباع تفترسهم وسلطت علي الشعب السليم شعب مارد لايم

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[1] < U [2] i ا U [3] < U [4] lege قبله U [5] خطيتي U [6] f ا U [7] lege اكتبت U [8] وشهدت U [9] الزوان U [10] lege i ك U [11] هولاي U [12] الزوان U [13] lege الضال U [14] قبيح U [15] وشنيع U [16] lege تلدغوهم

{18.27} I wrote in this book from beginning to end,[56] {18.28} and as Jesus said: *'I did not say to them except what you ordered me; that they should worship God, my Lord and Your Lord'*.[57]

{18.29} And I also wrote for him: '*We believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you*'[58] and with that I meant the Holy Gospel and that it is the truth that descended from | with Him and 38b
that what I taught him was falsity, because I am a sinful, guilty liar.'

{18.30} The monk Marhab said: 'And when Baḥīrā had said all that, he began to weep and to wail and to knock on his breast, repenting his sin. I comforted him and made him quiet and said to him: 'God is forgiving and merciful'.'

{18.31} And he said: 'My brother Marhab, all people commit sins, but not like mine. There is no forgiveness for my error, {18.32} because I wrote according to my fancy, as my sinful self desired. {18.33} | I 39a
left my home and went to this desolate forsaken desert to write this terrible thing there. It is contrary to monks, because monks live in the desolate wilderness to have their sins effaced and to increase their piety, except the miserable me. My sins doubled and my error increased, and I became an enemy to the Holy Spirit and I denied God, may He be praised, and I gave false witness.

{18.34} I confess that I sowed tares | amid the wheat, as is men- 39b
tioned in the Holy Gospel. And the Arabs, they are the tares, and I have sowed them amid the Sons of Baptism. I have truly become an enemy to the Holy Spirit. I strayed like a lost lamb, because of the sin that I committed. Verily, an unquenchable fire has been prepared for me, because I opened the door of ignominy and disgrace, and I blasphemed against the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, because I turned falsity into truth and I suppressed | the real truth. 40a

{18.35} I let loose rapacious wolves on the lambs of Christ and ravenous eagles and vipers that bite them and predators that devour them. I gave a rebellious ignoble people power over a faultless people.

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[56] Here, as well as in A2, the sentence is corrupt.

[57] Q 5:117, a verse that echoes John 20:17, in which Christ speaks of ascending 'to My Father and your Father, and to my God and your God'. In a Muslim reading of both these verses, they form Christ's acknowledgement of his full humanity. It is not certain whether the Legend mentions the verse as being one of Baḥīrā's compromised verses or whether it is meant to represent a sound Christian verse, which is wrongly interpreted by Muslims. For the ins and outs of the exegesis of John 20:17 and its long history in Muslim-Christian debate, see: Accad, 'The Ultimate Proof-text'.

[58] Cf. Q 2:4, Q 4:162.

ووخرت عبيد المسيح وقدمت عبيد الشيطان الخبيث ومكنت[1] روسهم وطامنتها لعدوهم وجعلتهم اسرا في ملك غيرهم {18.36} والزمتهم بجزيه يزينوها[2] طول ايام حياتهم ونكدت عليهم عيشتهم .

{18.37} فمن هو الدي عمل | ما عملت انا وكيف ارجوا[3] رحمه من قد قدم 40b
علي هده الحاله وهدا الامر ورما نفسه فيه الويل لي لقد استحسنت ما لا يحسن وحكيت عن الله ما لا يكن واحتقرت بالله ومسيحه وازدريت بقدرهما وبالحقيقه ان كل من يصبر من شعب المسيح علي ما ياتيه من الهوان وهو ثابت الايمان سيدخل النعيم بغير اعمال {18.38} فطوبا لمن صبر .

{18.39} فقلت انا مرهب الخاطي | ارجوا رحمتا ممن اوراك روياه في الجبل 41a
وشاء بهدا الملك لبني اسماعيل وهو[4] يقبل من تاب اليه وقرع باب رحمته[5] قبل ⌜نزوله الي حفرته[6] بزمان يسير .

{18.40} فقال يا اخي مرهب اكتب ما هي[7] من كتابي هدا {18.41} ان م الرجل صاحب هدا الامور الكاينه اتا الي بعد دلك وهو يبكي بكاء مرا شديدا وقال لي انت الدي فعلت بي هدا يا راهب مبارك | . 41b
فقلت له ما هو .

{18.42} قال ان اصحابي اتوا الي وقالوا ان كل نبي جاء فعمل[8] ايات والمسيح قد جاء[9] واحيا[10] اموات[11] واظهر فعل[12] العجايب[13] والمعجزات[14] وغيرهم متل موسي وداوود ونحن نريد منك ايه نراها فنقبلك .

{18.43} فقلت له انا كفيل[15] هدا الامر وكتبت له ومعنا ان رسل بايات ان يكدب فيها الاولين ويظلموا بها وما نرسل الايات حسبما اردت بهدا القول اسقاط ورميه | وعرفتهم ان كل نبي اذ لم يخبر بالغيب ما هو نبي مثل موسي 42a
وشعيا وحزقيال ودانيال وغيرهم .

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[1] lege? ونكست (cf. A2) [2] lege? يودوها (cf. A2) [3] i ي U [4] i < U [5] رضوانه ولو انه U [6] ⌜ وفاته U
[7] lege بقي U [8] وقد عمل U [9] < U [10] i < U [11] الاموات U [12] < U [13] + العظيمه والايات U
[14] i < U [15] اكفيك U

I set back the servants of Christ and put forward the servants of the malicious devil. I made them [lower] their heads, [handed them over] to their enemies and made them captives in a kingdom of others.[59] {18.36} I compelled them to *jizya*, which they will have to pay throughout the days of their lives. And I made their lives miserable.

{18.37} So who is he who has done | what I did, and how can 40b
someone who has arrived to this state and condition and threw himself in it, expect mercy? Woe to me, I have deemed good what is not good and I have told things about God which are not true and I have disdained God and his Christ and I have defied their power. Verily, all of the people of Christ who persevere during the degradation that is to come, while firm in the faith, will enter heaven, even without good deeds, {18.38} and blessed is the one who perseveres.'

{18.39} And I, Marhab the Sinner, said: | 'Hope for the mercy of 41a
the One who has shown you the visions on the mountain and who willed this kingdom for the Sons of Ishmael. He receives whoever turns to Him in repentance and knocks on the door of His mercy, even just before descending into his grave.'

{18.40} He said: 'My brother, Marhab, write down what remains from this book of mine.

{18.41} M, the subject of all these things that happened, came to me after that, weeping bitterly and heavily. He said to me: 'You are the one who did this to me, o blessed monk.'

So I said to him: 'What is the matter?' 41b

{18.42} He said: 'My companions came to me and said: "Every prophet who has come has worked miracles. And Christ has come and raised the dead and shown wonders and miracles, and others like Moses and David. So we want to see a sign from you and then we will accept you".'

{18.43} And I said: 'I will take charge of this matter' and I wrote for him: '*Nothing has prevented us from sending the signs except that the ancients cried lies to them. We brought Thamud a she-camel as a clear sign, but they harmed her and we will not send signs except to frighten*'.[60] With this saying I wanted to dismiss and dispel the matter. | And I taught them that someone who 42a
does not make known the hidden things of the future is not a prophet, like Moses and Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel and others.

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[59] The second verb between brackets has been supplied in accordance with the context; the verb in the manuscripts (وطامنتها) does not make sense.

[60] Q 17:59; many words of the verse are missing; A2 does include them.

{18.44} وكتبت له ايضا وانكحوا ما طاب لكم من النسا اثنين وثلاثين[1]
واربعه[2] وان خفتم ان لا تعدلوا فواحده وما ملكت ايدكم .
ودلك انه كان قد اشترا جاريه واحب ان يعلم نساه بهده الايه انها نزلت
عليه ليسكتوا عنه ويوريهم ان الله حلل له | نكاح ما مكلت[3] ايدكم[4] . 42b
{18.46} ثم عملت له ايه انه عرج به الي السما وعرفته بجميع ما كنت رايته لما
طلع بي الملاك الي السما ووصفت له ولم يبقي شي والا[5] وقد عرفته به وجعلته
يقول لقومه انه ركب البراق الي بيت المقدس شرفا له وان البراق الدي[6]
ركبها سالته ان يغفر دنبها {18.48} وانه شدها في باب[7] حلقة باب السما[8] سما
الدنيا | ليلا تهرب به ⸢فمن شدة ليلا تهرب[9] به عقد[10] {18.49} حتي سال 43a
غفران الدنوب وجعلت دلك عليه وعلي اصحابه ومن بعد مسيره انه لما جاء
يركبها لم تقف له حتي عرفها جبراييل ريس الملابكه وقال لها انه م وانها
تبشث له .
{18.50} ثم سالته وانهم كدبوه وقالوا له ما نريدك ان لم تصف لنا صفة السما
وصف لنا صفت البيت المقدس كيف هو .
{18.51} فقال حتي اسال ربي عنما طلبتوه مني | {18.52} وانه اتي الي وهو 43b
حزين القلب فوصفت له صفة بيت المقدس {18.53} وقلت له يقول[11] لهم
اني سالت ربي فوعدني انه يرسلها الي في جناح جبراييل حتي اصفها لكم شيا
فشيا .
{18.54} وكتبت له سبحان من اسرا[12] بعبده ليلا من المسجد الحرام الي
المسجد الاقصا الدي باركنا حوله .

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[1] وثلاث U [2] وارباع U [3] lege ملكت U [4] lege يده U [5] i < U [6] التي U [7] < U [8] < U [9] ⸢ lege
< (ditt?) [10] f ل U [11] lege i < [12] f ي U

{18.44} And I also wrote for him: '*Marry such women as seem good to you, two, three, four, but if you fear you will not be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own*'.[61]

That was because he had bought a slave-girl and he wanted to inform his women by means of this verse that it had been revealed to him, in order to silence them, and to show them that God had permitted him | to marry slave-girls.[62] 42b

{18.46} Then I made a verse for him saying that he ascended with him to heaven and I informed him about all the things I saw when the angel ascended with me to heaven.[63] And I described it to him in greatest detail. And I made him say to his people that he rode al-Burāq to the heavenly Jerusalem, as a sign of honor, and that al-Burāq, whom he mounted, asked him to forgive her sins, {18.48} and that he tied her to the ring of the door of the lowest heaven, | with a knot, so 43a that she would not flee, {18.49} until he had asked forgiveness for sins. I composed this against him and his companions, and |I wrote| that after his tour, when he came to mount her, she would not stand still for him until Gabriel the Archangel had told her that it was M, and that she then stood still for him.

{18.50} Then I asked him, but they had given him the lie and said to him: "We do not want you to give us a description of heaven. Give us a description of Jerusalem and how it is."

{18.51} So he said: "Let me ask my Lord about what you requested from me", {18.52} | and he came to me, sad of heart, and I gave him 43b the description of Jerusalem {18.53} and I said to him: 'Say to them: "I asked my Lord and he promised me that he will send it to me on the wing of Gabriel so that I can describe it to you bit by bit".'

{18.54} And I wrote for him: '*Praise to the one who traveled at night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque the precincts of which we have blessed*'.

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[61] Q 4:3.

[62] Cf. A2, p. 497.

[63] For the monks invention of Muḥammad's miraculous night journey, see also A2, pp. 519–521, and Roggema, 'A Christian Reading of the Qur'an', pp. 67–70.

{18.56} وجعلت كل من يجي من امته لا يقوا علي هدا الموضع ولا يدركه
لانه ما طلع ولا نزل وليس | هو نبي ولا رسول {18.57} ولكن بدنبي 44a
العظيم وتمام امر ربي الغفور والرحيم اجراه علي يدي وله تدبير في عباده .
{18.58} ثم اتاني بعد ايام اواخر[1] وقال اني مضيت الي صاحبا لي يسما زيد
فناديته فخرجت الي زوجته فنظرتها فشغفت بها وقد علم زوجها بدلك
فتخوف مني وقد تقلق قلبي بها كثيرا واريد ان تدبرني في هدا الامر لانك قد
اهتممت بي وكفيتني كل شي ولم يبقا[2] معي[3] | شي الا ودبرته لي وقد بلغني 44b
امرا عظيما وخطيا جسيما عند قبايل العرب وغيرهم .
{18.59} فقلت له انا اكفيك امرها هدا حتي لا يكون عندهم عار وتقول
جاني جبراييل ريس الملايكه {18.60} وقال لي قل فلما قضا زيدا منها وطرا
ازوجناك بها يا م لكيلا لا يكون علي المومنين حرج في ازواجهم[4] .
{18.61} وعملت له اشياه كثيره لا تشبه بالنبوه {18.62} ولا تليق | باصفيا 45a
باصفيا[5] الله {18.63} وجميع ما كتبته له هو ينقض بعضه البعض[6] .
{18.64} وجعلت الحجه عليه وعلي اصحابه من كتابه لانه مثل الشعر ولا
يشبه كتب الانبيا المتقدمين المرسلين من قبل الله حتي[7] وكل كتاب جاء
صاحبه فيه بتفسير ما خلا هدا الكتاب
{18.65} ثم كتبت له ك[8] ه ي ع ص و ط ه و ا ل م دلك الكتاب لان فيه
تفسير من الاب والابن والروح القدس | {18.66} وقلت لايعلم تفسيره الا 45b

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[1] اوخر U [2] f < U [3] < U [4] ارواحهم U [5] lege < U (ditt) [6] بعض U [7] حق U, lege? بالحق [8] < U

{18.56} And I made sure that nobody from his community would be able to deal with this passage or understand it, because he neither went up nor did he come down, nor | is he a prophet or an apostle. {18.57} 44a
But by means of my great sin and the completion of the command of my forgiving and merciful Lord, He fulfilled it through me, and to Him belongs the economy vis-à-vis his servants.

{18.58} Then he came to me days later and said: 'I went to a friend of mine called Zayd and I called him. Then his wife came out to meet me. I saw her and became infatuated with her, but her husband found out and he is alarmed because of me. My heart is very restless because of her, and I want you to guide me in this matter, because you have taken care of me and you have solved everything for me and there is | 44b
nothing which you have not settled for me. Now this terrible matter has crossed my path, which is a huge sin in the eyes of the Arabs and others.'

{18.59} And I said to him: 'I will protect you in this matter, so that there be no disgrace with them. You say to them: 'Gabriel the Archangel came to me {18.60} and said to me: *"Say: 'When Zayd had dissolved his marriage with her, We married her to you, in order that it may not be a fault with the believers regarding their wives'"*.'[64]

{18.61} And I made many things for him that do not resemble prophecy {18.62} nor befit | the chosen of God. {18.63} And from 45a
all that I wrote for him, the one part invalidates the other.

{18.64} And I constructed proof against him and against his companions, by means of his book, because it is like poetry and it does not resemble the Scriptures of the ancient prophets, who were sent by God [with the truth].[65] And with every Scripture its master brought exegesis, except with this one.[66]

{18.65} Then I wrote for him: '*K H Y ʿ Ṣ*'[67] and '*Ṭ H*'[68] and '*A L M. That is the Book*',[69] because there is exegesis in it about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.[70] {18.66} | and I said: '*Nobody knows the* 45b

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[64] * Q 33:37.

[65] According to Muslims the Qur'an is *sui generis*, which is one of the reasons why it is considered inimitable; it is therefore taboo to call it poetry, as the monk does here.

[66] See A2, p. 525, n. 158, n. 159.

[67] Q 19:1.

[68] Q 20:1.

[69] Q 2:1–2.

[70] See Ch. 5, pp. 131–132, for the Christian interpretation of the opening words of Q 2.

الله تعالي والراسخون في العلم وجعلت كل من يجي بعده مخبرا فيه لانني لم اجعله مخبرا فيه لانني لم اجعل له تفسير متل ساير الكتب {18.67} رضا[1] بكل من منهم يفسر علي قدر عقله وتحققت انهم يختلفون من بعده ويزيدوا فيه وينقصوا منه ويكتب كل واحدا ما احب واختار كما ذكرت في اعلا كتابي هدا

46a {18.68} وقد كشفت فيه الحال من نعمة الله علينا | نحن معشر النصاري وقد كمل تدبير الله وما اراده لهدا الرجل علي يدي وانتهيت بالعنايه عنده من اجل اخوتي بني معموديه والابا الرهبان ووكدت[2] العنايه بهم والوصيه عليهم ونسال الله الخلاص والسلام {18.69} لانني اعلم ان سيكون لنا منهم اعدا يودونا[3] بشرهم ويسقونا مرارتهم {18.70} ويخرج علينا منهم قبايح عظيمه جدا .

46b {18.71} وانا مرهب الخاطي اقمت في الدير | مع بحيرا الراهب زمانا طويلا وحدثني ووصف جميع ما قد شرحته في كتابي هدا من اوله الي اخره ورايته وشاهدته وتبينت[4] لي احواله وكتبته من فمه بين ايديه وصححته بين ايديه .

{18.72} وقال لي لا تلوموني انت ولا كل من يقف[5] ويسمعه من ساير الاخوه النصاري [6] لاجل ما فعلته ووصفته في هدا الكتاب لاني[7] عملت

47a ما عملته وفهمته ورايته | {18.73} انه ملك ولابد من مملكته وبلوغ غايته واستيفا[8] نهايته وتمام امره وما قد قراته وفهمته وسمعته وعاينته وجعلت المومنين بالمسيح من عنايتهم[9] واخدت لهم منه عهدا وميثاقا طول ايام دولته {18.74} وشكرته علي دلك وهو كان اديبا لبيبا وجيها مكرما محبوبا مقبولا

47b وهو منمن يستحق الملك والتقدمه دون غيره وهو كان | يصالح بينهم ويحكم في امرهم ويدبر شانهم[10] والعرب كلهم شاكرين منه .

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[1] دصا U [2] واكدت U [3] i + و U [4] وبينت U [5] lege + عليه U [6] f ا U [7] لانني U [8] unclear in T, a hole in U [9] f < U [10] a hole in U

*exegesis except God, the exalted, and the well-versed in knowledge*'.[71] And I made everyone after him an expert in it, because I did not make him an expert in it, since I did not make exegesis of it like the other Scriptures, {18.67} accepting that each one of them interprets it according to his own intelligence. And I know for sure that after him they will disagree about it and add to it and subtract from it. Everyone will write what he likes and prefers, as I have mentioned above in this book of mine.[72]

{18.68} I have disclosed in it the reality of God's beneficence to us, | 46a
the community of the Christians. God's economy has been fulfilled, with what He wanted for this man at my hands. And I have attained his care for my brothers, the sons of baptism, and the fathers and the monks, and I have assured their care for them and the directive concerning them.[73] And we ask God for salvation and peace, {18.69} because I know that we will have enemies from amongst them, who will do us harm with their evil and make us drink their gall, {18.70} and their horrendous shameful deeds will come our way.'

{18.71} And I, Marhab the Sinner, stayed in the monastery | with 46b
Baḥīrā for a long time and he related and described to me all that I have explained exhaustively in this book of mine. I took notice of it and was witness to it, and its circumstances were clear to me. I wrote it down literally in his presence, and I corrected it in his presence.

{18.72} And he said to me: 'Do not reproach me for what I did and described in this book, neither you nor anyone from the other Christian brothers who finds it or hears it, because I did what I did and I comprehended and saw {18.73} | that he is a king and that 47a
his kingdom, his success and the accomplishment of his mission were inevitable, as well as the things I had read, comprehended, heard and observed. I placed the believers in Christ under their care, and I obtained a treaty from him for them and a pact throughout the days of his rule.'

{18.74} And I thanked him for that. He was well-mannered and understanding, noble and honored, loved and well liked. He belongs to those who deserve fortune and prominence. He used to | settle 47b
their affairs and act as a judge between them. And all the Arabs were grateful to him for that.

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[71] Q 3:7; see A2, p. 525, n. 158, n. 159.
[72] See A2, p. 525, n. 160.
[73] This refers again to the protection of monks under Islamic rule; see: {15}- {15.4} and Ch. 4, pp. 113–121.

{18.75} والعالم كله يتقي شرهم ومكرهم لانهم قوم اشرار جفاه فطوبا للمومنين المحتملين العارفين فيهم وارثي الحياة الدايمه في ملكوت السما الي الابد .

امين امين[1] والسبح لله دايما[2]

[1] < U [2] + امين U

{18.75} The whole world is on its guard for their evil and their slyness, because they are an evil, brutish people. Blessed are the believers amongst them who endure and discern, heirs of the eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven, forever.

Amen, Amen, and praise be to God everlastingly.

CHAPTER TWELVE

# THE LONG ARABIC RECENSION

{0} بسم ⌜الاب والابن والروح القدس الاله الواحد[1]
نبتدي بعون الله تعالي وحسن توفيقه بنسخ[2] خبر[3] *بحيره[4] الراهب[5] *مع الرجل الاعرابي ⌜وما حكاه عن نفسه لمرهب[6] الراهب بسلام من الرب امين[7] .
{1} قال[8] انا مرهب الخاطي *بينما[9] انا[10] ادور في البرية زمانا *طويلا اد قد نظرت ⌜عن بعد ديرا[11] عظيما[12] {2} فقصدته ولما[13] اتيت اليه ودخلته فوجدت فيه راهبا شيخا[14] يسما بحيره {2.5} فلما راني سلم على وفرح بي جدا[15] وقال[16] سبحان الله الدي اوراني وجهك ⌜في هدا اليوم المبارك[17] فان[18] لي اليوم[19] اربعون[20] سنة ⌜لم يكن[21] رايت وجه[22] نصراني غيرك[23] والان[24] قد[25] علمت وتحققت[26] انه[27] ⌜قد فنيت حياتي[28] وقربت[29] وفاتي *والله سبحانه[30] اتا بك الى هاهنا[31] لتعلم كل خبري لتخبر[32] به المومنين[33] ⌜وبما جرى لي بهدا المكان[34] .
اعلمك يا اخي انني[35] رجل خاطى[36] من اهل انطاكية {3} فمضيت[37] ⌜في بعض الايام[38] الى جبل[39] طور سينا *لاتبارك[40] باتار القديسين واخد بركة[41] صلوات[42] الرهبان المقيمين هناك {3.2} فلما ⌜وصلت اليهم[43] صليت في تلك المواضع[44] المقدسة فقال[45] لي بعض الشيوخ[46] | الرهبان يا اخي . 155a

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[1] ⌜ الحي الناطق Y [2] ونكتب Y [3] اينيا / ابنيا Y ? X, قصة Y [4] بحيريا Y [5] + وروياه بطور سينا وما جرى
[6] ⌜ وخبره مع مرهب Y [7] *< X [8] مرهب الراهب + lege [9] i + ف X [10] اقمت * Y
[11] ⌜ ~ (312) X [12] < X [13] ف i X [14] < X [15] < X [16] قايلا X [17] ⌜ < X [18] * < X كتيرا وفيما انا دات
يوم من الايام امشي في البريه واذ ترايا لي ديرا من بعيدا وانى قصدته وسرت نحوه الى ان وصلت اليه واني قرعت الباب برفق فخرج الي راهبا ففتح لي الباب وادا به بحيريا الراهب فلما رايته سلمت عليه وقربني اليه بسرورا وفرح وانه قال لي هلم وادخل فلما دخلت قال لي من اين جيت فالله الدي جا بك وجمع بيني وبينك
[19] + لان Y [20] اربعين XY [21] ⌜ ما XY [22] < Y [23] الا انت Y [24] i < X [25] <
X عندي [26] < XY [27] f < XY [28] ⌜ ~ (312) Y [29] وقرب وقت Y [30] + تعالى X [31]
X, i + ف Y
كنت + X, اني كنت [35] < WX [34] ⌜ [33] لتحدث X كل العالمين W [32] وتتخير W (first word of W),
فقلت له انا عند دلك عرفني يا ابي لاي حاجه اتيت الي هدا الموضع الشعت فقال لي دنوبي جلبت علي * W,
XW صلاة [42] < XW [41] لاستبارك XW [40] < Y [39] < Y [38] ⌜ < Y [37] i < Y [36] هدا جميعه لاني Y
[43] ⌜ < XW [44] الاماكن W [45] i < XW [46] الاخوة W

{0} In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God, we begin to write, with the aid of God, exalted is He, and the goodness of His assistance, the history of the monk Baḥīrā with the Arab from the desert, and what he told about himself to the monk Marhab, with the peace of the Lord, Amen.[1]

{1} The monk Marhab said: 'When I, Marhab the sinner, had been wandering in the desert for a long time, I suddenly saw a large monastery from a distance.[2] {2} I went towards it and when I reached it and went inside, I found an old monk there who was called Baḥīrā. {2.5} And when he saw me, he greeted me and was very glad to meet me. And he said: 'Praise be to God, who showed me your face on this blessed day. Today it is forty years that I have not seen a Christian face, besides you, and now I know for sure that my life has come to an end and that my death is at hand. And God, praised be He, has made you come here in order to learn my whole history so that you can inform the believers about it and about what happened to me in this place.

I tell you, my brother, I am a sinful man from the people of Antioch.[3] {3} One day I went to Mount Sinai to receive blessing from the historical sites of the holy men and to receive blessing of the prayers of the men living there.[4] {3.2} And when I came to them, I prayed in those holy places and one of the old monks | said to me: 'My brother!'. 155a

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[1] The 'Arab from the desert' is obviously Muḥammad. Rather than referring to him as 'the Arab man' (*al-rajul al-ʿarabī*), the text uses the term for desert Arab or Bedouin: *al-aʿrābī*, a term that in reality does not apply to the Prophet, but which is used pejoratively in order to suggest that he belonged to a primitive nation.

[2] The name of the narrator *Mrhb* has been vocalised in this translation as 'Marhab' on the assumption that it derives from the Syriac Mar Yahb, the name of the narrator according to ES. This was already suggested as the correct reading by Gero in: 'The Legend of the Monk Baḥīrā', p. 52, n. 36. Alternatively one could read Murhib. See, for example, by Griffith, 'Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥīrā', p. 147.

[3] This is the only recension to mention Antioch; in A1 there is no mention of the monk's origin. ES mentions Bēt Garmai and WS Bēt Qudshāyē.

[4] *Āthār*, translated as 'historical sites', can also mean relics.

⌜قلت له لبيك .
قال ايها الرجل الصالح[1] سوف يظهر الله لك[2] سرا عظيما ⌜حين تخرج من هدا المكان .
فقلت له تكون ارادة الله تعالى .
تم اني قضيت ما على من الزياره وخرجت من دلك المكان[3] {3.7} فلما صرت[4] برا[5] الجبل نظرت[6] نورا عظيما ⌜لم يري متله[7] وملايكة[8] كتير[9] وابصرت[10] صليبا[11] عظيما[12] يضى[13] على الارض كلها[14] متل[15] الشمس سبعة اضعاف وملاكا عظيما[16] {3.8} ففزعت[17] لدلك[18] فزعا شديدا .
{3.9} فقال لي الملاك لا تخاف {3.11} وابصرت[19] اربعة رووس[20] ارواح تحرك[21] بعضها لبعض[22] .
{3.12} وابصرت[23] اسدا ابيض قد[24] اقبل من جوا[25] البرية فاكل[26] الشرق والغرب ⌜والبرية والشام[27] *وشرب[28] ما[29] البحر *وانحدر[30] الى[31] الغرب[32] وفي راسه اتناعشر[33] قرنا[34] فقال لي الملاك[35] هدا ملك بني[36] اسماعيل .
{3.13} ⌜تم ابصرت[37] دابة سوده[38] فاكلت[39] الشرق والغرب[40] ولها[41] *تلاتة[42] قرون[43] فقال لي الملاك[44] ⌜هدا ملك[45] بنى هاشم ابن محمد .
{3.14} وابصرت[46] تورا[47] قد اقبل من البرية[48] وله[49] خمسة[50] قرون فاكل[51] اربع[52] اطراف الدنياء[53] وانحدر الى الموصل فقلت للملاك ما هدا فقال لي[54] هدا[55] ملك المهدي ابن علي وفاطمه[56] وكما ان التور متضع | هادى[57] كدلك[58] 155b

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[1] ⌜ < XW [2] < WX [3] ⌜ وتعاينه عيانا W, < X, * لاصلي فيه واقمت بدلك الجبل اياما وصعدت فوق الجبل وصليت هناك وانى سمعت الاخوه الرهبان يقولون فلا بد لكل من ياتي الي هدا الموضع المقدس ان يظهر له رويا من الله تعالي ان تكون نيته صادقه وشوقه شديدا واجتهاده رشيدا فلما قاموا الرهبان الي الصلاه ابصرت[6] Y علي lege[5] W الى +[4] Y خرجت انا في بعض الليالي من الدير ولم يعلم بي احدا من الرهبان [7] ⌜ < WXY [8] Y مع ملايكة [9] W, مقدسين X, f + ة Y كتيرين [10] Y ثم ابصرت [11] f + ن Y لوقتي فعند دلك[17] Y من الملايكه قايما +[16] Y ضوء + W, ك i + [15] W يظي[13] Y وهو +[12] Y [14] < W ايضا +[19] Y تم ابصرت W, [20] < Y [21] Y تحاول [22] i < WY [23] first word of Y فزعت [18] < Y V, + بعد دلك Y و i +[24] VW داخل[25] VW, نحو Y و i[26] VWX, وانه اكل وشرب Y [27] ⌜ < X + VWXY اتني عشر[33] X < *[32] Y نحو[31] Y تم انه بعد دلك انحدر[30] Y < *[29] W من +[28] X, ⌜ < XW [37] VW هاشم +[36] Y < XY [35] Y قرن فقلت للملاك من هو هدا X, فقلت للملاك ما هو هدا والبريه والشام والبحر +[40] i < W [39] Y قد اقبلت من ناحيت الشام f ا VX, [38] Y وابصرت ايضا بعده فقلت للملاك من هو + X, فقلت للملاك ما هو هدا +[43] f < Y [42] Y وفي راسها[41] Y ثم نزلت في باب هدا Y, * ~ VW [44] < XY [45] ⌜ im W [46] Y وايضا ابصرت X, تم ابصرت جحرا +[48] V ثور[47] WXY [53] f < VWXY [54] < VWXY [49] Y وفى راسه [50] < Y [51] i و VW, وانه اكل Y [52] f + ة Y فهكده VWX, هكدا[58] W ا f + [57] VW [56] X ه f [55] VW

I said to him: 'at your service!'.

He said: 'O righteous man, God will show you a great secret when you go out of this place'.

And I said: 'Let God's will be done, exalted is He'.

Then I fulfilled my duty of the pilgrimage and I went out of that place. {3.7} And when I went onto the mountain, I saw a great light, the like of which has not been seen, and many angels. And I saw a great cross that gave light to the whole earth, seven times brighter than the sun, and a great angel.[5] {3.8} I feared deeply because of that.

{3.9} But the angel said to me: 'Do not fear!' {3.11} And I saw the four heads of the winds stirring up each other.[6]

{3.12} And I saw a white lion coming from inside the desert and it ate the East, the West, the desert and Syria.[7] It drank the water of the sea and it descended in the West. And on its head were twelve horns. And the angel said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael'.[8]

{3.13} Then I saw a black beast and it ate the East and the West and it had three horns. And the angel said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Sons of Hāshim, son of Muḥammad'.

{3.14} And I saw a bull that came from the desert and it had five horns. It ate the four corners of the world and descended in Mosul. And I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the Mahdī, son of ʿAlī and Fāṭima. And as the bull is humble | and quiet, likewise his kingdom will be humble and quiet. 155b

[5] See WS (p. 321, n. 15) for the motif of the brightness of the light.

[6] Cf. Dan 7:2.

[7] The latter two terms, *al-barriyya wa-l-shām*, can also be translated as 'the South and the North'.

[8] For the historical background of the apocalyptic animals featuring in {3.12}–{3.18}, see above: Ch. 3.

يكون ملكه متضعا هاديا *وكما ان الاسد يكسر ما[1] وافاه كدلك يكون صاحب الاسد لايقف بين يديه احدا يقاتله[2] ولهدا المهدي تترجا[3] قبايل بني اسماعيل[4] وبه[5] يتم ملك العرب[6] .

{3.15} وابصرت[7] ايضا نمر قد اقبل من الغرب[8] بيجري[9] لابسا لباس من[10] الدم فقلت للملاك ما[11] هدا فقال لي[12] ملك بني سفيان[13] الدي يبيد بني اسماعيل بالسيف .

{3.16} وابصرت ايضا تيس من[14] المعزي[15] قد اقبل من الغرب[16] وبلغ[17] الي بيت المقدس فقلت للملاك من[18] هدا فقال لي هدا ملك القطرانيين[19] الدين[20] هم بني نفطان[21] .

{3.17} وابصرت ايضا اسدا يزير قد[22] اقبل من البريه بقوه عظيمه فاكل[23] الكل[24] ووطي[25] الكل ولم يقف بين يديه شئ فقلت للملاك ما[26] هدا فقال لي[27] هدا *هو[28] الدي[29] يسمي[30] المهدي ابن عايشه في دلك الزمان ¬تكون في ايامه[31] شده[32] عظيمه لم يكن[33] متلها في العالم .

{3.18} *وايضا ابصرت[34] رجلا لابسا لباس اخضر فقلت للملاك ما[35] هدا فقال لي هدا ملك بني اسماعيل الاخير الدي ¬يكون فيه[36] فناهم[37] .

{3.19} ¬وايضا ابصرت[38] مركبه[39] مزينه بكل[40] حسن فقلت للملاك ما هده[41] فقال لي هدا ملك الروم الدي | يملك علي[42] الارض كلها الي[43] اخر 156a
المملكات .

{3.20} ¬وايضا ابصرت[44] تنينا عظيما فتح[45] فاه وبلع[46] الجميع بلا شفقه ¬ولا رحمه ولا حنو[47] فقلت للملاك من[48] هدا[49] فقال لي هدا هو[50] المسيح الكداب الدي يقال له المسيح[51] الدجال[52] ¬الدي ياتي[53] في اخر الازمان[54] ويهلك كلما وافاه .

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1 كلما Y 2 يقابله VW 3 ي i VW 4 * < X وفيه VWXY 5 الغرب X 6 تم ابصرت X 7 المغرب X 8 شقيان VW 9 < VWXY 10 < VWY 11 ن f Y هدا VX, هذا + W 12 ا f VWX 13 القطرايين Y 14 < VWX 15 ا f Y المغرب VWY 16 تم بلغ VW 17 f < VWX 18 يفضان V, 19 ن f Y 20 ا f X الجميع Y 21 ي i X 22 و + i X يقطان W, lege 23 < VW 24 يكون VWXY 25 شديده + X 26 في ايامه يكون VWY, (231) ~ ¬ 27 يسماء Y 28 * < VW 29 فناوهم Y, * < X 30 من هو Y 31 f < Y, ¬ ~ VW نظرت VW 32 يصير X, 33 شكل + X 34 في VWXY 35 ا f VWXY 36 < X 37 f < X ايضا VWX 38 حنيه W, حيفا V, ا f X 39 وابتلع X, ويبلع VW, فابتلع Y 40 ي + i X 41 < X ¬ Y, 42 الزمان VXY 43 وسياتي Y 44 ن f V 45 < Y 46 leaves missing in W VWX

And just as the lion shatters all that is in front of him, so will the one of the lion be.[9] No one who fights him will withstand him. This Mahdī is expected by all tribes of the Sons of Ishmael. With him the reign of the Arabs comes to an end.'

{3.15} And then I saw a panther that came running from the West, wearing clothes of blood. And I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'The kingdom of the Sons of Sufyān who will destroy the Sons of Ishmael with the sword'.

{3.16} And I also saw a goat-buck coming from the West, and it reached Jerusalem, and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the kingdom of the people from Qatar, who are the Sons of Joktan'.

{3.17} And I also saw a roaring lion coming from the desert with great force. He ate all and trampled all, and nothing could withstand him. And I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the one who is called the Mahdī, son of ʿĀ'isha. And in that time there will be great distress, the like of which has never been before in the world'.

{3.18} And I also saw a man wearing green clothes and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the last king of the Sons of Ishmael with whom their end will be'.

{3.19} And I saw also a chariot adorned with all beauty and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the King of the Romans who | will rule the whole world until the end of all 156a kingdoms'.[10]

{3.20} And I saw also a great dragon that opened its mouth and swallowed all without pity or mercy or sympathy. And I said to the angel: 'Who is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the false Messiah called Antichrist, who will come at the end of times and destroys all that comes his way'.

[9] This phrase, which could refer both to the twelve-horned lion of {3.12} or the second Mahdī of {3.17}, seems out of place and is absent in other recensions.

[10] See the note to {3.19} in ES (p. 261).

{3.21} ⌜وايضا ابصرت[1] الشيطان ⌜خزاه الله تعالي[2] وقد[3] تعالي ⌜نحو السماء واتي[4] متل البرق وامتلا[5] حسدا وغيضا.[6]
{3.22} ⌜وايضا ابصرت[7] رجلا قد اقبل من المشرق بلباس ابيض حسن[8] فقلت للملاك ما[9] هدا فقال لي هدا ايلياس[10] النبي[11] الدي ياتي في تمام الايام[12] بين يدي المسيح الحقاني .
{3.24}⌜وابصرت ايضا[13] تلاتة[14] ملايكه[15] لابسين[16] نورا[17] متمنطقين بالدهب[18] فقلت للملاك من[19] هولاء[20] فقال هولاء[21] ⌜جبراييل وميكاييل[22] وواحد[23] من السارافيم[24] .
{3.25} تم[25] غابوا[26] عني[27] الملاكين وبقى[28] الواحد الدي[29] من السرافين[30] فقال[31] لي[32] *ايها الانسان الفزع[33] يهدي[34] روعك[35] فهديت[36] واطمنيت[37] وسكتت[38] فقال[39] لي اتبعني⌜ولا تخاف {3.26} فتبعته[40] وطلع[41] بي معه[42] الي السماء ⌜كالنايم بالروح لا بالجسد[43] ونظرت الي السماء *وسماء سموات[44] الرب[45] {3.27} ونورا[46] عظيما لا يتكلم[47] به {3.28} وسمعت[48] نغمات[49] الملايكه[50] ⌜تسبه الي عتيق الايام[51] تسبيحا[52] عظيم جدا لا يحاط به[53] ولا يدرك ولا يحصي اصوات | التمجيد[54] للتالوت[55] الموحد[56] الواحد[57] الاب 156b والابن والروح القدس *قايلين[58] قدوس قدوس قدوس الرب الصباووت[59]
{3.31}⌜وايضا ابصرت[60] الدنيا ⌜تريد ان[61] تنحل وتبطل[62] والسما[63] تنطوي[64] متل[65] القرطاس {3.33} *⌜وانحلت الارض[66] وصارت خاويه[67] {3.35}

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[1] ⌜ VXY [2] ⌜ < VXY [3] i < V [4] واتا V, ⌜ السماوات Y [5] i < V وغضب VX, [6] وابصرت ايضا ⌜ VXY
[7] ⌜ Y وغيظا [8] Y مهاب VX وابصرت ايضا [9] + هو X, f ن Y [10] f < Y [11] < VX الجزو [12]
[13] ⌜ Y وايضا ابصرت [14] f < VXY [15] + مقدسين V [16] illeg Y [17] < V, Y بنور
[18] Y بلهيب نارا تشعل V, بمناطق كالنار تلهب [19] f ا V, + هم X, منهم Y [20] Y هولاي الثلاثه
[21] + هم V, غاب [22] ⌜ Y ي V, f ميكاييل وجبراييل V [23] واخر V [24] f ن X, الصارافيم Y
[25] + للوقت V [26] Y غابا [27] < Y [28] f ا V الشرافييم V, f م Y [29] < X [30] + ثم قال V, i < Y
[31] Y واني هديت X, فتهديت [32] + وفزعك X, روحك [33] Y المرعوب [34] i ت X, i < Y يا
[35] Y واطمانت [36] < XY, * لا تدعرنا لما ابصرت لكن هدا روعي وطيب قلبي V [37] ⌜ Y ثم انه قال
[38] < VXY وانا كمتل النايم وليس بالجسد بل ⌜ [39] Y وانه صعد X, ف i [40] V لما هدي روعي اخدني
[41] V ينطق [42] Y ونظرت نورا V, وابصرت ايضا نورا [43] V وسما السماء * [44] Y السماوات
[45] Y بالروح وعتيق X, وعتيق الايام يسبح له V, وعتيق الايام يسبحون له ⌜ [46] V عظيمه [47] V ط i
[48] V تم سمعت [49] X < Y [50] < V [51] + ء V [52] f + الوحيد Y [53] + الدي V [54] < Y
[55] Y الايام جالس تسبح له [56] < V [57] < Y [58] VX وابصرت ايضا ⌜ [59] < Y X, * < Y الصباووت V, الصباووت السماء والارض يملوه من مجدك
[60] ⌜ < X [61] < V [62] + ايضا Y [63] تطوا Y [64] كظي V [65] ⌜ والارض انحلت V [66] * < X [67]

{3.21} And I also saw Satan (may God, exalted is He, confound him) going up to heaven, coming like lightning. And he was filled with envy and wrath.

{3.22} And I also saw a man coming from the East in beautiful white clothes, and I said to the angel: 'What is this?' And he said to me: 'This is the Prophet Elijah, who comes at the end of times before the true Christ'.[11]

{3.24} And I also saw three angels dressed in fire and girded with gold. And I said to the angel: 'Who are these?' And he said to me: 'These are Gabriel and Michael and one of the Seraphim'.

{3.25} Then the two angels went away from me and the one belonging to the Seraphim stayed and he said to me: 'O fearful man, may your soul be calmed down', and I calmed down and became quiet and silent. And he said to me: 'Follow me and do not fear'. {3.26} And I followed him and he took me up to heaven, as if I were asleep, in the spirit, not in the body. And I looked at heaven and at the heaven of heavens of the Lord, {3.27} and I saw an unspeakably great light there {3.28} and I heard the melodies of the angels, endlessly extolling the Ancient of Days, with great praise and with unfathomable and innumerable voices | glorifying the One Unified Trinity, the Father, the Son 156b
and the Holy Spirit, saying: 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts'.[12] {3.31} And I also saw the world about to dissolve and become nothing, and heaven being rolled up like a scroll. {3.33} And the earth dissolved

[11] Cf. Matt 17:11.
[12] Isa 6:3.

وابصرت[1] القديسين داهبين[2] الي الفردوس والخطاه[3] داهبين[4] الي ⌜العداب الموبد[5] *وادخلني[6] بالروح لا بالجسد[7] {3.36} وابصرت[8] تلاميد ربنا[9] يسوع المسيح في ⌜درجه عظيمه عاليه[10] لا اقدر ⌜اصفها ولا ينطق لساني ببلوغ[11] نعتها[12] وابصرت[13] *يوحنا المعمداني عظيم الشان اعلا[14] من جميع الانبياء[15] وابصرت[16] ايضا الشهدا دونهم وهم[17] مجتمعين كلهم علي[18] درجاتهم وداوود[19] النبي يسبح بتهليلا ⌜وكل الانبياء[20] يقرون بها كانوا يتلونه في الدنياء[21] بفرح وسرور وتهليل[22] عظيم {3.37} وابصرت[23] شجرة المعصيه التي[24] ⌜هي شجرة[25] الموت وابصرت[26] شجرة[27] ⌜التوبه التي هي شجرة الحياة {3.39} وابصرت ايضا وادي[28] *عظيم كبير[29] جدا ⌜عظيم الغمق[30] فيه[31] نار لا تطفا[32] ودود لا ينام وعداب لا يهدي[33] وناس[34] اكتر من رمل البحر يصيحون[35] واسنانهم تصر[36] متل الرعد العظيم وترتعد[37] متل[38] الريح العاصف من شدة[39] العداب فتنهدت[40] وبكيت[41] وقلت ما[42] يفيد[43] الانسان لو ربح[44] العالم كله[45] وخسر[46] | 157a
نفسه {3.40} هدا كله[47] ابصرته بالروح لا بالجسد .

{4} عند[48] دلك قال لي الملاك الموكل بي ادهب[49] الي موريقا ⌜ملك الروم[50] واكسر عصاك قدامه وقول له هكدا[51] ينكسر[52] ملكك من[53] **بني اسماعيل *وادهب[54] الي كسري[55] ملك الفرس واكسر ⌜نصف عصاك بين يديه[56] وقول له هكدا ينكسر ملكك من[57] وحوش البريه[58] {4.2} فدهبت[59] الي موريقا ملك

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[1] + ايضا XY [2] وهم داخلين V, < X, متوجهين Y [3] + وهم V [4] داهبون X [5] < Y, ⌜ الجحيم V [6] < X, + جدا Y, ⌜ [7] < VX * سيدنا V [8] + ايضا X [9] نعمتها X [10] + اعظم Y [11] + ايضا X [12] لسان بشري ينطق بها ولا يصل الي بلوغ V [13] + اختلافات Y [14] leaves missing in V [15] < XY ابن زكريا وقد اعلا اكبر من جميعهم [16] وكلهم Y [17] < X f كتير X [18] < X, * عظيما بالعمق Y [19] + منها XY [20] < X f ويرتدوا X [21] + انه X, اقتنا XY [22] < X واني تنهدت Y [23] < X f ي X [24] + ف i + جميعه Y [25] continuation of W [26] < ** عصاك النصف منها قدامه W [27] + ايضا W [28] < X f ا i X [29] + قدام Y [30] + وهكدا قمت لساعتي Y [31] < W, * و i فرحت X, واني دهبت Y

and became empty. {3.35} And I saw the holy going to paradise and the sinners going to eternal torment. And He made me enter in spirit, not in the body. {3.36} And I saw the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ on a high and lofty rank that I cannot describe and to which my tongue is unable to do full justice. And I saw John the Baptist, of high rank, above all the prophets. And I also saw the martyrs beneath them, all together at their ranks, and the prophet David, praising God with jubilation, and all the prophets reading what they used to recite in the world with great joy, happiness and jubilation. {3.37} And I saw the tree of disobedience, which is the tree of death, and I saw the tree of repentance, which is the tree of life. {3.39} And I saw a tremendously great and deep gorge, in which there was an unquenchable fire, and a worm that does not sleep, and torment that does not stop, and people, more than the sand of the sea, screaming and gnashing their teeth like great thunder and shuddering like a storm, from the intensity of the torment. And I sighed and wept and said: 'What does a man gain if he acquires the whole world and loses | his soul?'[13] {3.40} All this I saw in 157a
the spirit, not in the body.

{4} Then the angel in charge of me said to me: 'Go to Maurice, King of the Romans, and break your staff before him and say to him: "Likewise shall your empire be broken by the Sons of Ishmael", and go to Chosroes, King of Persia, and break half your staff before him and say: "Likewise your empire shall be broken by the wild beasts of the desert".' {4.2} And I went to Maurice, the King of the Romans, and I

[13] Matt. 16:26, Mark. 8:36, Luke 9:25.

الروم وصنعت قدامه[1] كما[2] امرني الملاك *فلم يغضب[3] على[4] وقال[5] لي[6] تكون[7] مشية[8] الله في خلقه[9] {4.4} ودهبت[10] الي كسري[11] ملك الفرس[12] وصنعت قدامه[13] كما امرني الملاك[14] {4.5} فاجاب وقال لي من اين قلت هدا واين رايت هده[15] الرويا {4.6} فقلت له ⸢في طور[16] سينا موضع[17] اخد موسي الثوراة[18] من الله[19] فقال لي اي شي ابصرت هناك فقلت[20] له ابصرت حمار الوحش قد[21] طلع واخد[22] عنزا[23] وتوطاه[24] برجليه[25] وخبرته[26] باخباري[27] فلما[28] سمع هدا[29] تنهد وقال[30] ادهب بسلام .

{5}واني[31] خرجت من عنده ودخلت[32] بلاد[33] الايتار[34] وصرت[35] انادي فيهم ان[36] لا يسجدوا لصلبان **كتيره ولكن لصليب واحد *ولا يرسموا في[37] كنايسهم صلبان[38] كتيره ولكن صليب واحد[39] في كل كنيسه ويكون سجودكم[40] له ⸢وقلوبكم الي[41] صليب ⸢ربنا يسوع المسيح[42] *المخلص الدي به تخلص[43] العالم[44] | كما ابصرت انا في طور سينا صليبا واحدا قايما في 157b
الدنيا كلها فلما سمعوا ⸢اساقفة الناحيه دلك مني[45] طردوني من بلادهم .

{6} فوقعت في هده[46] البريه نحو بني[47] اسماعيل فانست[48] اليهم[49] وانسوا الي[50] وحادتوني[51] وحادتهم[52] فاويت[53] الي هدا[54] الدير وعمرته {6.8} والصقت[55] به[56] *بير ما[57] عدبه[58] طابت[59] {11} وصارت[60] العرب تجي[61] وتستقي[62] منه {11.2} ويجلسون[63] عندي في كل الاوقات ويانسون[64] بي وانس[65] بهم[66] ويقضون حوايجي واقضي حوايجهم {11.3} وكل شي كنت امرهم به *واشير ⸢به عليهم[67] يمتتلونه ولا *يخالفون[68] دلك[69] .

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[1] continuation of V, < Y [2] i < W [3] يصعب Y [4] f + ه VW, عليه دلك Y [5] بل انه قال Y [6] < Y [7] i ي W [8] ارادة Y [9] خليقته VW [10] ثم اني دهبت Y [11] كرسي Y [12] الروم VW, القدس Y [13] < Y [14] *< X (hom) [15] f ا VWX [16] ⸢بطور Y [17] في الموضع الدي VW [18] التوريه VW, + ايضا Y [19] + سبحانه Y [20] i < VW [21] i + و VW [22] واتخد VWX [23] f ه W [24] i < X [25] برجل Y [26] + لي X, [27] بجميع اخباري VW, يا احباي بجميع ما رايته Y [28] فلا Y [29] + الكلام Y [30] + الى V [31] واني VW [32] + بلد Y [33] الايتار Y, lege? شنعار [34] وصرت VWY, وبديت [35] واخدت Y [36] + ب Y انهم X, i [37] علي Y [38] **< X (hom) [39] *< VW (hom) [40] سجودهم Y [41] ثابته Y [42] ⸢السيد Y [43] i < VWX مخلص العالم Y [44] *< Y, ⸢ ~ (3412) X [45] f ا [46] فانه X [47] leaves missing in W [48] و i V [49] بهم Y [50] بي Y [51] وحدتوني VXY [52] وحدتهم VXY [53] فاوويت X, واتيت Y [54] f ه X [55] وحفرت Y [56] فيه Y [57] f + ء X [58] f < VX [59] طيب V, < [60] f ا V هدا البير وحصل فيه ماء كثيرا عدبا وانتفعت به الاعراب * X, Y [61] يجو V, وصاروا يجوا اليه Y [62] ويستقوا V, ويسقوا Y [63] f ا X [64] ويستانسوا Y [65] واستانست Y [66] اليهم V [67] ⸢ ~ V, * < X [68] f ا V يخالفونه *Y [69]

did before him as the angel had ordered me to do. And he did not get angry at me, and he said: 'Let the will of God be done to His creatures'. {4.4} And I went to Chosroes, the King of Persia, and I did before him as the angel had ordered me to do, {4.5} and he answered and said: 'Why do you say this and where did you see this vision?'[14] {4.6} And I said to him: 'On Mount Sinai, the place where Moses received the Torah from God'. And he said to me: 'What did you see there?' And I told him: 'I saw a wild ass raising up and seizing a goat and trampling it with its feet' and I told him my history.[15] When he heard this he sighed and said: 'Go in peace'.

{5} And I left him and went to the country of [Shinar],[16] and I began to proclaim to the people that they should not bow in worship to many crosses, but just to one, and that they should not depict many crosses in their churches, but just one in every church: 'You should bow in worship to that and your hearts should be devoted to the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior by whom the world is redeemed, | 157b just as I have seen one cross on Mount Sinai standing above of the whole world'.[17] And when the bishops of that region heard that about me they expelled me from their country {6} and I ended up in this desert with the Sons of Ishmael. We became intimate with each other and conversed together. I sought shelter in this monastery and made it my home. {6.8} I made a well of fresh water next to it, {11} and the Arabs began to come and draw water from it, {11.2} and they would sit with me all the time and we got on well. They fulfilled my needs and I theirs. {11.3} And whatever I commanded and advised them to do, they fulfilled obediently.

[14] litt. '*whence* do you say this' (*min ayna*).

[15] The other recensions all have 'crown' rather than 'goat'.

[16] The manuscripts have 'al-Aytār' and 'al-Ansār', both of which do not make sense. As elsewhere in the text the corruption may be due to the transmission without diacritical punctuation, and the most likely reading is Shinar, as in the Syriac recensions in {6}.

[17] See above, p. 437 ({3.7}) for the one cross which the monk saw on Mount Sinai. This is the only recension to make the connection between that vision and the monk's attitude toward the cross; in the other recensions it is perhaps implicit. See for this issue: Ch. 4, pp. 95–104 above.

{6.5} ⌜فاخدت اقول[1] لهم انكم ستملكون ملكا عظيما قويا[2] سبع[3] سوابيع[4] وتنزلون[5] هده[6] البريه كلها وتسمونها[7] قبله ويكون[8] لكم دوله عظيمه متسعه[9] جدا واخدت[10] اخبرهم بخبر ابوهم[11] اسماعيل ووعد الله لابراهيم فيه باظهار[12] الملك[13] والسلطان[14] وكترة[15] النسل وبخبر[16] ⌜امه هاجر[17] وكيف لقيها[18] الملاك ⌜في الطريق[19] تلاتة[20] مرات[21] وقال[22] لها لا تحزني سيكون من ولدك شعب عظيم يشتد به[23] ظهرك ⌜ويكون له ملك[24] كبير[25] تم خبرتهم[26] بما قراته **من قول[27] اشعيا النبي اد يقول ان عدد ملك[28] بني قيدار *عدد سنه الاخر[29] وتدهب كرامتهم بعد دلك[30] وبما قرااته[31] من قول بلعام اد يقول تملك[32] بني[33] اسماعيل سبع[34] سوابيع كبار | منيعه وحدتهم[35] بما قراته من قول دانيال النبي اد يقول سياتي 158a شعب اسماعيل ويقف في موضع القدس وخبرتهم[36] بما[37] قراته من[38] قول

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[1] ⌜ VX [6] f ا وتتركون ?lege [5] Y مسبعه + [4] V ة + f [3] Y منيعا + [2] Y وانني ابتديت بدلك بقولي
X باظفار [12] V ابيهم [11] Y ان + X, وبديت [10] VXY منيعه [9] VX وتكون [8] Y وتوسعونها [7]
V, f < تلثه [20] Y < ⌜ [19] X لقاها [18] X ~ ⌜ [17] X وخبر [16] X < f [15] X والسلاطين [14] X الملوك [13]
Y, الاخير [29] V < [28] Y < [27] V ا + i [26] X كتير [25] X < ⌜ [24] Y منه [23] Y وقوله [22] Y مرار [21]
قراته [31] V يكون عدد كتير لا يحصي عددهم وبعد دلك تدهب كرامتهم واخبرتهم ايضا *[30] الاجير lege
قد + [37] V واخبرتهم [36] Y وخبرتهم [35] V ة + f [34] Y بنو [33] V, i + س سيملك [32] Y قراته ايضا V
[38] continuation of W

{6.5} And I began to say to them: 'You will rule a great mighty kingdom for seven weeks. You will [leave] this entire desert behind and call it 'Qibla'.[18] And you will have a great vast empire'. And I began to inform them about their father Ishmael and God promising Abraham, with regard to him [i.e. Ishmael], the future appearance of the rule and power and the great number of his descendants, and about the history of his mother Hagar and how an angel met her on the road three times and said to her: 'Do not be sad. From your son a great people will come forth, by whom you will be strengthened, and he will have a great kingdom'.[19] Then I informed him about what I had read of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah, when he says that the length of the rule of the Sons of Kedar will be the number of the year of a [hireling],[20] after which their nobility will disappear, and of what I read from Balaam, when he says 'The Sons of Ishmael will rule for seven great powerful weeks'.[21] |. And I told them about what I had read from 158a
the prophet Daniel when he said 'Ishmael's people will come and stay in the holy place'.[22] And I informed them about what I read from the

[18] The first verb is *tanzilūna*, 'you will dwell in', in the *manuscrit de base*. On the basis of the statement that 'you will call it 'Qibla'', and *qibla* meaning 'South', the reading *tatrukūna*, 'you will leave behind' seems preferable. The suggestion is that the term 'Qibla' for the Muslim direction of prayer only makes sense when one is North of Mecca.

[19] Cf. Gen 21:17–18.

[20] Cf. Isa 21:16. Muslim apologists saw the prophecies regarding the future might of the Sons of Kedar in the Hebrew Bible as references to Islam (see for example the *Letter of Hārūn al-Rashīd to Constantine VI*: Ṣafwat, *Jamharat rasā'il al-'Arab*, vol. 3, p. 264 (t), Eid, *Lettre du Calife Harun*, pp. 74–76 (tr)). Christian apologists, for their part, adduced Isa 21:16's prediction of a time span according to 'the year of a hireling' to show that this might was only temporary. See for example: Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter', p. 301 (t), p. 233 (tr). See also: Roggema, 'Biblical exegesis and interreligious polemics'. The prophecy about the Sons of Kedar does not feature in the apocalyptic parts of the *Legend*.

[21] Balaam or Bileam is the Mesopotamian soothsayer who features in Numbers 22–24. He was asked to curse Israel but miraculously God made him bless the Israelites and predict their victories. His oracles as contained in these Biblical chapters do not refer to the Sons of Ishmael. Although there is no prophecy in his name surviving in Arabic apocalyptic literature, it may well have existed, as the Arabic meteorological-astrological prophecies called *Malḥamat Dāniyāl* also allude to predictions made by Balaam. See Pingree, 'Astrology', pp. 291–292; Steinschneider, 'Apocalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz', part 1, p. 651.

[22] The Sons of Ishmael are not mentioned in the Book of Daniel. This statement is either based on one of many apocryphal Daniel apocalypses or on the interpretation of 'the King of the South' in Dan 11 as the might of Islam, as is found often in Christian Arabic writings. See Roggema, 'Biblical exegesis and interreligious polemics'.

متاديوس[1] اد يقول عن ملك بني اسماعيل ⌜وانتشارهم في الارض[2] وتمكينهم[3] منها[4] وانهم[5] لا يقف بين ايديهم احد ويكون لهم دوله قويه[6] شديدة الباس[7] {11.5} وسيقيم الله رجل منهم كبير الحال {11.6} وعدة[8] ملوك يخرجون من عصبه ويكترون علي[9] الارض جدا[10] ويسمي[11] اسمه ⌜محمد ويحمد[12] ويكون دكره في اقطار الارض[13] .

{12} وفي بعض الايام كنت واقف[14] ⌜علي البير استقي الماء[15] بعد حديتي[16] معهم بثلثة[17] سوابيع **⌜من الايام[18] *حتي[19] ابصرتهم[20] مقبلين الي[21] ومعهم ⌜حدت شاب[22] فصيح شهم[23] سليط متراس[24] عاقلا اديبا[25] فهما[26] *يامر الجمالين[27] وينهاهم وكدلك[28] التجار يقبلون[29] منه[30] {12.2} فقلت في سري[31] واستخرت[32] ربي ** *⌜وحرزت عليه[33] وقلت ينبغي[34] ان يكون هدا[35] الرجل[36] يتروس[37] علي[38] بني اسماعيل[39] ويكون ملكا عليهم ⌜ويكون للدوله[40] لانه شاب[41] نسبته[42] الرياسه *⌜فان له[43] حرمه[44] وصوله .
فقلت[45] له يا فتي ما اسمك .
فقال[46] محمد .
{13.1} فقلت له[47] انت[48] صاحب الملك والسلطان ولك[49] تكون[50] الدوله واسمك[51] هو المدكور ** *واليك[52] تكون القبايل والشعوب[53] ويكون اسمك

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[1] مادیوس Y [2] كلها + Y, ⌝ ~ (231) W [3] وتمكنهم VY [4] فيها Y [5] f < W [6] عظيمه Y [7] ** <
محرما سين وتفسيره احمد ومحمد ⌜ [12] VWX, f ا Y ويكون [11] < Y [10] ويملون [9] X وعزه [8] X
VW, قايما [14] X كلها + [13] Y سوجامس الدي تفسيره احمد ومحمد ,X محرما سين وتفسيره احمد محمد
XY قايم [15] ماء Y, ⌝ ~ (3412) X [16] VW خدمتي [17] f < W, بتلاتة XY [18] ⌝ < W
شهيم [23] Y شاب حدت حسن ⌜ [22] VW واد اقبل الي جماعة منهم ** [21] X الا وهم * ,Y واذا هم [20]
ذو دهن + ,W دكيا + [26] X دهنا + [25] Y مريس ورايته ,X متزايس ورايته ,VW متزين ورايته [24] VWX
VW اليه ويسمعون + [29] Y فرايت [28] VW اهل قبيلته [27] Y خاطر وله فهما كبيرا بصيرا [30] < V, +
*[34] VW وحررت فكري ⌜ [33] VW, f ه Y واستجرت [32] Y نفسي [31] X < * ,Y والاعراب يسترشدونه
وجال فيه فكري وحققت فيه ظني ان تلك الرواية له واني حرت عليه وتقدمت الي بين** [36] X ه f [35] < X
يتايس ,X يترااس [37] Y يديه وتميزته جيدا فوجدته موافق لما رايته وقلت في نفسي ان هدا الرجل هو بالحقيقة
يشبه [42] X شب ,W + ا f [41] VWXY وتكون الدوله له ⌝ lege [40] V اسمعيل [39] W جميع + [38] Y
VWXY قالي ,V + قال لي [46] Y ثم اني قلت ,VWX تم قلت [45] VW وله خزاله * [44] Y وله ⌝ [43]
*[53] VW ه f [52] Y لان اسمك [51] X < X [50] X دلك [49] Y ف i + [48] Y ابشر + [47] Y اسمي + ,X لي
Y ومنك تخرج الشعوب

sayings of Methodius, who mentioned the rule of the Sons of Ishmael, their spreading over the earth and their dominion over it, and that no one will be able to stand before them, and that they will have a mighty powerful rule:[23] {11.5} 'And God will raise up from among them a great man, {11.6} and a number of kings will come forth from his loins and they will be many on the earth, and his name will be Muhammad, and he will be praised and mentioned in the corners of the earth.'[24]

{12} And one day I was standing at the well, drawing water, three weeks after having last talked with them, when I saw them approaching towards me. And with them was an eloquent, astute young man with a sharp tongue, who behaved like a leader. He was bright, well mannered and quick witted, and he had command over the camel drivers, and the tradesmen obeyed him as well. {12.2} And I said to myself, while asking my Lord for guidance and protection: 'This man is bound to become the head of the Sons of Ishmael. He will become their king and he will have the power, because he is a young man perfectly fit for leadership. He is respected and has authority'.

I said to him: 'Young man, what is your name?'

And he said: 'Muḥammad'.

{13.1} And I said to him: 'The rule and the power will be in your hands. You will have a great realm. Your name is the one mentioned

[23] This is an allusion to the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, notably its predictions in ch. V [8] and XI [1]; Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1 p. 10, p. 24 (t); vol. 2, p. 14, pp. 40–41 (tr).

[24] 'And he will be praised', *yuḥammadu*, is probably a corruption of 'Aḥmad', which features in the variant readings of the other manuscripts and alludes to the Q 61:6 in which Jesus predicts the advent of an apostle named Aḥmad.

158b يدكر في ⌜اقطار الارض[1] وخبرك ينتشر[2] | في جميع[3] الدنيا ويري[4] كل[5] من يدكر[6] اسمك وعظمك[7] *يكون[8] قد قرب[9] قربانا لله[10] نقيا زكيا .
تم[11] اشرت عليه ⌜بالانصراف مع اصحابه والرجوع[12] الي ⌜بعد دلك[13] وحده[14] حتي اعرفه[15] واوقفه[16] علي كلما[17] يريد[18] ان[19] يعمله[20] فانصرف[21] الغلام[22] مع[23] الاعراب[24] الدين كانوا معه **وهم حزاناء[25] وقد امتلوا عليه حسدا[26] *تم[27] رجع[28] الي بعد تلاتة[29] ايام[30] وهو قلقا معلق[31] القلب بما[32] اخبرته[33] به فجلس عندي ⌜وحدته وحدتني[34] وسالني واستقصا[35] مني ⌜واختبر واعتبر[36] فقال[37] لي ⌜جعلت فداك[38] *اني قد[39] سمعت من شيوخا[40] حديثا[41] لا[42] ادري[43] هو حق[44] ام لا .
فقلت له *اي[45] حديت[46] سمعت[47] .
فقال لي ان قبايل العرب[48] ملكوا الشام ⌜وقد استعبدوا[49] الخلق وصاروا في قبضتهم ستين سنه *حتي قام عليهم[50] رجل من بني اسراييل يقال له جدعون القاضي فحاربهم[51] وهزمهم[52] وانتصر عليهم ولم[53] يفلت منهم[54] الا بعضهم[55] ورجع[56] الي هدا الموضع فاستانس[57] اليه تسعة انجاد[58] من العرب وسكنوا بالشام ولم يرجعوا الي هده الغايه[59] واخاف[60] *ان تكون[61] هده[62] المره ايضا[63] تصير متل تلك الاولي[64] فانصرف[65] انا واصحابي مخسرين[66] .

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[1] ⌜ الاقطار VW, ** [2] i م X في اقطار الارض وفي قبايل الشعوب [3] كل VWY [4] f ا VY, < X [5] i
Y اني + [11] X > [10] VW انه يقرب *[9] Y انه X, فانه[8] X ه f, ويعظمه[7] VWY i < X[6] و + X
Y ك f, X < [14] VW فيما بعد ⌜, Y, مضيهم X, < [13] Y وقلت له امضي مع اصحابك وعجل بالرجوع ⌜[12]
لوقته وانصرفت + [22] Y و i[21] Y ت i[20] < VWX[19] Y ك f[16] Y ما[17] V, < W[18]
واما هو *[28] Y انه +[27] Y وغيظا +[26] Y القلوب +[25] X > [24] Y وانصرف معه[23] VW, f + ه Y
ى f[35] < X [34] ⌜ خبرته[33] V, i < WXY منغلق[31] Y قد +[32] ** < X[30] V ثلثة[29] VW فرجع
الشيوخ[40] X > [39] ⌜ < X [38] Y وانه قال VWX, و i[37] VW, ⌜ < X بنا كلمته به ففرح +[36] VW
Y هل +[43] Y ليس[42] VW تم سالني وقال لي اريد ان اسالك عن كلاما اخر سمعته من شيوخ *[41] Y
VWY واستعبدوا ⌜[49] Y كانوا قد +[48] Y ه f + [47] VW ما هو الدي *[46] Y و + i[45] Y ب + i[44]
i[56] Y قليل اليسير والتزم الحقير[55] VW > f[54] Y ا f[53] W وهربهم[52] Y وانه حاربهم[51] VW >[50]
+ [61] W ايضا +[60] X > *[59] Y اجناد W, lege ابجاد[58] VWY واستامن[57] Y ورجعوا W, <
Y من هده النوبه الاخري تصير تلك تكون * VW, f < X, ه f[64] < VWX[63] X ا f[62] V, < W ايضا
X فارجع[65] X محسرين V, مخزيين[66]

and tribes and peoples will follow you. And your name will be mentioned in the corners of the earth and your story will spread | in the 158b
whole world and everyone who mentions your name and your glory will regard it as offering a pure and wholesome sacrifice to God.'[25]

Then I told him to go away and leave with his companions and to come back later on his own, so that I could teach him and acquaint him with all he wanted to learn. The youngster departed with the Arabs who were with him and who were sad and full of envy of him. Then he came back to me after three days, worried and anxious, because of what I had told him. So he sat with me and we conversed together. He asked me questions and interrogated me, and was inquisitive and mindful. And he said to me: 'May I be your ransom![26] I have heard a story from some sheikhs, of which I do not know whether it is true or not.'

I asked him: 'What story have you heard?'

And he said to me: 'The tribes of the Arabs have ruled Syria and subjugated its people and they remained under their power for sixty years, until a man of the Sons of Israel stood up against them, called Gideon the Judge. He waged war against them, put them to flight and defeated them. None but a few escaped and they returned to this place. And nine contingents of the Arabs established a friendly relationship with him, settled in Syria, and never came back until now. I fear that this time it will go like that first time; that me and my companions will withdraw defeated.'[27]

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[25] Cf. John 16:2; see below p. 489, n. 99, for the application of this Biblical verse to Muslims.

[26] This is a common expression of deference mixed with affection; see Samir and Nwyia, 'Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne', p. 557 and n. 2, Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, p. 279 and p. 278, n. 2.

[27] This passage echoes an apologetic argument that is already to be found in the earliest Christian texts dealing with Islam. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* as well as the *Disputation of Bēt Ḥālē* recall Gideon's victory over the Midianites (Judges 6 and 7) in order to show that there has been an Arab domination of the Holy Land even before Islam and that Muslim rule, like Midianite rule, will be temporary and not invincible. That the alleged words of Muḥammad here are dependent on these writings is clear from the reference to a period of sixty years, which is at odds with the Biblical reference (Num 6:1) to seven years (Reinink, *Die Syrische Apokalypse*, vol. 1, p. 10 (t), vol. 2, pp. 13–14 (tr.); MS Diyarbakir 95, fol. 8a). The striking aspect of this passage is the fact that the earlier apologetic argument is turned upside down: Muḥammad expresses the prediction that his rule will be ephemeral and weak and the monk asserts that, on the contrary, his rule will very long and mighty.

فاجبت وقلت[1] له لا[2] لعمري ما تنصرف[3] مخسرا[4] بل تغلب وتنتصر وتملك
سبع[5] سوابيع مسبعه[6] وتزيل[7] | اهل بيتك وجميع[8] قومك عن سجودهم[9] 159a
للاصنام[10] الي سجود لله[11] تعالي[12] وحده[13] .
{14.5} فقال[14] لي فانت[15] لاي رب تعبد .
فقلت له[16] لله[17] الازلي خالق السموات[18] والارض وما بينهما .
فقال لي ومن[19] هو هدا حتي نعرفه *ونعرف[20] به[21] .
فقلت له الله الازلي الحي الدي لا يموت التالوت الواحد القدوس الاب
والابن والروح القدس ⌜الاله الواحد[22] الصاباوت[23] *الخالق[24] الناطق[25]
بكلمته الكل[26] الحي[27] المحيي بروحه تالوت[28] في اقانيمه واحد[29] في جوهره .
فقال[30] لي هدا[31] تقليد[32] عظيم حكيم[33] ما تضبطه عقول[34] قومي ولا تفهمه[35]
اريد[36] ان **تقصر[37] *لي[38] علي مختصر الامانه وفضل[39] الامانه[40] .
فقلت له القصد المعبود كلمة الله الخالقه ⌜الازليه الواحد[41] في الجوهر[42] مع
الاب وروح القدس الممجد الدي نزل من السماء[43] وتجسد من روح القدس
ومن مريم العدري وعمل الايات وصعد الي[44] السموات *⌜وياتي ايضا[45]
ليدين الاحيا والاموات الدي ليس لملكه انقضا ⌜ولا زوال[46] .

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[1] i ف X [2] i ي X [3] ترجع X [4] محسرا V, مخزيا X [5] f + ة VW [6] منيعه VWX, + لان ليس
هدا الدوله الاوله لان هدا برويا وخطاب وايات طهرت لي من اجلك وقد امرني الملاك الدي كان موكل بي
من قبل الله عز وجل باني امضي واعرف بك ملك الروم وملك الفرس بانك تغلبهم وقد عرفتهم بهده الامور
جميعهم وانت قريبا سريع وباركت عليه وقلت له الرب يعظم اسمك في الارض كلها ويكثر زرعك ويجل
في بيتك من بعدك ويكون كلامك يعلو الكل ويدك تجوزهم واعلم يا ابني انك ستملك ملكا عظيم وتدكر
دكرا كبيرا وتفتح بين يديك المدن والبلاد والقري ويخرج من زرعك اثنى عشر ملكا ويعظم ملكهم في الدنيا
كلها ويملكون مملكات كثيرة ويكسرون بلدانا عظيمه ومدنا منيعه ويكون لهم سلطانا عظيم وليس مملكة تقدر
ان تقف بين ايديهم ويعظمون اسمك في الدنيا كلها كما يعظم اسم الاله ويكون مشركا باسمه ادا دكر دكر
سمعه فقال لي من اين علمت بهدا الدي قد قلته لي فبينت له وعرفته انه من رويا رايتها لك بطور سينا وخبرته
بجميع ما رايته بيان مبين فقال لي فمن اتا بك الي هدا الموضع فقلت له سيدي يسوع المسيح الدي بعتني
اخبرك واعرفك انك تكون ملكا علي الارض جميعها واربعه وعشرون ملكا ويملكون من بعدك وكثيرا منهم
قتلون Y وترد[7] Y وكل[8] VW السجود[9] VWXY وتنقلهم + VW[10] الى الله[11] X < VWXY[12]
الواحد[13] Y ثم انه قال[14] Y < VW[15] i < VW[16] لالله[17] Y السماء[18] VW i < VWX[19]
ونعترف[20] X * < Y[21] الحي + X[24] الصباووت[23] VWY اله واحد ⌜[22] VW * ~ Y[25] lege[26]
ل i VWY, < X[27] < X[28] التالوت V[29] الواحد VW i < X[30] < VW[31] leave missing[32]
in V < X[33] عول X[34] ولكن + W, تفهموه Y[35] منك + W, وايرد X, واريد منك Y[36] lege[37]
تختصر علي في شرح الايمان وقصد ** X, علي بالكلام * W, الديانه[40] W وقصد[39] W < X[38] تقتصر
من حيث لا يفارق السماء + W[43] جوهره[42] Y المسيح المتجسد الاله المحمود المعبود المتفق ⌜[41] Y الديانه
Y اعلي +[44] Y ⌜[45] Y وايضا ياتي في جسده ⌜[46] < W, * < X

I answered him: 'By my life, no! You will not withdraw defeated. Instead, you will triumph and gain victory, and you will rule seven great sevenfold weeks, {14.4} and you will convert | your family and 159a
the whole of your people from their worship of idols to the worship of God, the exalted, alone.'

{14.5} And he said to me: 'Which Lord do you worship?'

I said to him: 'God, the Eternal, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and that which is in between.'[28]

He said to me: 'Who is this, so that we may know Him and make Him known?'

I said to him: 'The eternal living God, who does not die, the One Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God Sabaoth, the Creator, who speaks with His Word to all, who lives and gives life with His Spirit, Trinity in hypostases, One in substance.'

And he said to me: 'This is a great and wise belief, which the minds of my people will not grasp or understand. I would like you to restrict yourself, for my sake, to the concise form of the creed and its benefit.'[29]

And I said to him: 'The ultimate object of worship is the creating eternal Word of God, one in substance with the Father and the glorious Holy Spirit, who has come down from heaven and became incarnate from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary and who has worked miracles and ascended to the heavens and who will come again to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end and no cessation.'

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[28] This expression occurs numerous times in the Qur'an and has obviously been chosen to show that at a fundamental level the Christian understanding of God does not differ from that of Muslims. For the content of the monk's 'catechism' to Muḥammad, see Ch. 4, pp. 104–113.

[29] The term *amāna* can sometimes mean 'faith', but more often means more specifically 'creed' in Christian Arabic (see: Samir, 'Entretien d'Elie de Nisibe', p. 44) This appears to be the case here too, in light of the following words of Baḥīrā which form a simplified creed, based on the Nicene Creed. It is also interesting to note that Muḥammad asks for a 'concise form' or 'abbreviation' of it. The term used is *mukhtaṣar*, a term frequently used in Arabic literature for abridged redactions of important voluminous works. Such epitomes do not rephrase the original work, but condense it by means of exerption. It is being suggested here that that is what happened: the monk gave his 'catechumen' a brief description of the creed which concentrated on the concepts of 'Word and Spirit'; the next question is meant to show that these are the terms that stuck with Muḥammad, and that even if he did not fully comprehend what they meant, they are nevertheless reflective of the monk's attempt to present the 'ultimate object of worship' (*al-qaṣd al-ma'būd)*. See also Ch. 4, p. 107.

فقال لي ان بشرت انا[1] بهده[2] الكلمه والروح[3] يتم لي .
فقلت له وكيف[4] لا يتم[5] وقد بشر بهدا[6] من كان قبلك من الانبياء الدين[7]
لا يشك فيهم[8] ولا يرتاب *⌜في قولهم[9] فتم[10] امرهم[11] وكبر[12] شانهم ⌝وشكر
فعلهم[14,13] وصح قولهم | بتمام[15] فعل[16] المسيح في الارض وانت[17] تصحح[18] 159b
مجي المسيح واياته[19] وقيامته[20] وطلوعه الي السماء[21] فيكون[22] قولك[23] مصدقا[24]
عند الامم والشعوب ما خلا اليهود الملاعين فانهم يكدبون قايلين[25] انه[26]
لم يات[27] بعد لان الدي اتي ببدع[28] فصلبناه[29] ⌜وقتلناه وابدناه[30] وهم في هدا
كادبون[31] *ومن مكرهم انهم اعتدوا لكل[32] الامم وما اتفق اتنين[33] منهم علي
رجل الا دبرا[34] في قتله[35] ⌜فعند دلك[36] كتر غضبه علي اليهود وساعدني[37] علي
بغضهم[38] ومقتهم ولعنهم[39] .
{15} تم قال لي ان تم لي[40] هدا الامر يا راهب مبارك فتمنا[41] علي كلما[42] شيته[43]
فاني ابلغك ⌜شانك ومامولك في الدنيا[44] .
{15.1} فقلت له ما[45] اريد منك شئ *من[46] غرض الدنيا ولا[47] ما[48] قل
ولا ما[49] جل ولا مناي[50] الا العنايه بامر النصاري في ايام ملكك وملك
قومك لانهم[51] اعضا[52] ضعفا[53] *وقد اومروا[54] بالتواضع والصبر الشديد[55]
{15.2} وفيهم رهبان[56] مساكين فقرا[57] وقد[58] زهدوا في[59] هده[60] الدنيا وبغضوها

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[1] < WX [2] f ا X [3] < X [4] i ف Y [5] + لك W [6] بها Y [7] f < X [8] في قولهم W [9] ⌜ بقولهم X,
[10] وقد ثم Y [11] فتم قولهم * W [12] وعظم V [13] ⌝ < X [14] continuation of V [15] + ما
[16] فعله سيدنا VW [17] + الاخر V [18] ف i الايات W [19] < X, وفعله Y [20] + من بين الاموات Y
[21] السماوات Y [22] ل i VW [23] + لك Y [24] + محققا بما قد سبق بديا عيانا بيانا Y [25] ويقولون X
[26] ان [27] < X, ⌝ ~ W [28] بعد V, بعد W, < X, [29] ونحن Y [30] i < Y [31] كادبين Y
[32] على كل V [33] اتنان VW [34] دكروا Y [35] * < X [36] ⌜ فعندما قلت له هكدا VW [37] i < X, وثم انه
[38] بغضتهم Y [39] ولنعتهم X [40] < Y [41] فاتمنا VWY, i ا X [42] i + ب W [43] تشتهيه Y
[44] ⌝ ساعدني [45] < X, لم Y [46] < X [47] i < VWX [48] f ن X [49] ن f امرهم VWY [50] * < Y
[51] لان النصاري VW, قوما [52] فانهم Y [53] + اعفا [54] VW, lege ? < XY [55] * < X ربهم Y
[56] < X [57] + كثير Y [58] i < VX [59] < X محتاجين Y [60] < X

And he said to me: 'If I would preach this Word and this Spirit would I succeed?'

And I said to him: 'How could you not succeed, when the prophets before you preached this, without being doubted and without their words being questioned? They succeeded and they were honored and their work was praised, and their sayings proved true | by the fulfill- 159b
ment of the work of Christ on earth. And you will confirm the coming of Christ and his signs, his resurrection and his ascension to heaven. Your sayings will be given credence by the nations and peoples, except by the cursed Jews. They lie, saying "the Messiah has not come yet, because the one who brought heretical innovations—we crucified him, killed him and destroyed him". They are lying about this, and through their slyness they have become enemies of all nations. Whenever two of them fix their mind on a man they plot to kill him.'[30] With that his anger at the Jews increased and he encouraged me to hate them, to detest them and to curse them.

{15} Then he said to me: 'If I succeed in this matter, o blessed monk, you can desire anything you like from me and I will fulfill all your needs and wishes in the world.'

{15.1} And I said to him: 'I do not want anything from you from this world, neither little nor great, nor do I have any wishes except |that you| care for the situation of the Christians during the days of your rule, as well as the rule of your people, because they are feeble. They have been commanded to be very humble and patient. {15.2} Amongst them are poor monks who have renounced this world and detest its fine

[30] The last phrase of this passage shows clearly that Arab Christians do not want to be bracketed together with the Jews as one undifferentiated group of *Ahl al-Kītāb* (See Teule, 'Paul of Antioch's Attitude', pp. 91–92, for similar argumentation in related texts). This phrase is noteworthy. The statement of the monk echoes the ḥadīth 'No two Jews can be alone with a Muslim except with intent to kill'; the ḥadīth features in al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf* (vol. 1, p. 663; noted by McAuliffe, *Qur'anic Christians*, p. 220) in the connection with Q5:82, as it does here (see next footnote). The ḥadīth is said to go back to Abū Hurayra but is not part of the standard collections. The *Legend* exploits an anti-Jewish 'slogan' by connecting it with their supposed killing of the Messiah, insinuating that if Muḥammad ever said this, he must have done so with the crucifixion in mind. It is worth noting that these polemical expressions ultimately derive from Jewish maxims which began with 'if two Jews…', as for example in *Mishnah Avot* 3,2: 'If two [Jews] convene and no words of Torah [are spoken] between them, there is the seat of the scornful'.

وما فيها من خيراتها[1] ونعيمها وتخلوا عنها وهربوا الي السخاري[2] والبراري وانفردوا لنفوسهم[3] وطلب[4] خالقهم[5] فتحمل[6] عنهم الادا[7] والموديه[8] والعنت[9] والتعدا[10] من اصحابك[11] علي جماعتهم وتامر ان لا يوخد منهم ⌜خراج ولا جزيه [12] لانهم قد[13] بغضوا[14] الدنياء | ولم يلتفتوا علي[15] نساء ولا علي[16] اولاد 160a ولا علي[17] مال ولم يلتمسوا[18] شيا منها ⌜البته وايضا اريد منك ان تامر[19] ان لا يلحق احدا من النصاري[20] ظلم[21] ولا جور {15.3} فانك[22] ان حملت عنهم هدا[23] رجوت ان ⌜يمد الله في ملكك[24] ويديم سلطانك .

{15.5} فقال لي[25] علي[26] انا ان[27] امر قومي ان لا يوخد من راهب[28] خراج[29] ويبجل[30] وتقضا[31] حوايجه[32] ويعني[33] باحواله[34] *وامرهم[35] في امر[36] جماعة النصاري ان[37] لا يتعدا[38] عليهم *ولا يغير عليهم في[39] رسومهم شيا[40] وتعمر كنايسهم وترفع[41] روسايهم[42] *ويقدموا[43] وينصفوا[44] ومن[45] ظلم احدا منهم كنت[46] خصمه[47] ⌜يوم القيامه[48] .

فقلت له احسن الله[49] جزاك وبارك لك فيما اعطاك فقد قلت[50] ما انت من اهله .

{16} فقال لي *قد بقى[51] ⌜على شده[52] كيف[53] تقبلني **اهلي *وبين[54] قومي[55] وتقبلني[56] عليهم ملكا وانا عندهم[57] ⌜حقيرا فقيرا[58] *لاني[59] يتيم عند[60] عمي[61] ابي طالب مقيم[62]

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[1] X ل i /VW حيواتها W, [2] Y الخيرات ورفضوا جميع [3] XY السحاري [4] VW لانفسهم [5] lege في طلب VW [6] X خلاصهم [7] Y الادوات [8] VW, < X, والرزايا [9] Y والموونه VW, والعبت [10] X التعقد WY, f ي < X [11] Y الجميع + الجزية ولا خراج ⌜ [12] X [13] < X [14] i + ا VW [15] ا i ولا + [16] VWXY [17] i ا VWY, < X [18] VW يلتفتوا الي [19] ⌜ X وتامر [20] f < V [21] الله يزيد في ايام ,V الله يرتد في ايام مملكتك ,⌜ Y, عمرك وينبت ملكك [22] X انت + [23] Y جميعه [24] X ضيم مملكتك W, [25] f ه X الله يزيد في ملكك [26] < X [27] < X [28] lege + جزيه ولا VWY ولا + [29] X جزيه [30] W, < X وان يكون مسجل ,V وان يكون مبجل [31] f ى VWY [32] f + م X [33] VW, ويعتنا [34] f ا XY [35] X م + ايضا VW [36] * ويهتم بامره واعظم الوصيه علي Y [37] i + ب Y [38] f ى يتعدوا X, + احدا Y [39] X من * [40] VW, احدا في شي من رسومهم ولا VW, لا يتعرض اليهم بمكروه ويتقدموا [41] Y وترتفع [42] Y ايضا + VW, روسهم X [43] VW خصيمه [44] X وينتصفوا X, * [45] i < Y ولا تنكد احدا عليهم واقول لقومي ان [46] i + ف X [47] W ا f ⌜ [48] < VW تعالي + [49] Y لي + [50] VW واحده [51] X, ⌜ واحد شيء اخر اريد ان اقوله لك عن ما [52] Y اني مفتكر في حالي ومكابرا في قضية امري وما اعرف ما يكون لي * ,VW قلت لي [53] i < Y و+ [54] Y تم انهم يقيموني ,X, < VW, ان اكون [55] X قومي بين قبيلتي ** ,VW بين قبيلتي وقومي * [56] Y بعين + [57] < VWY و + [58] Y ~ W ⌜ النقص [59] VW لانني [60] < X, * < VWY, [61] i [62]

and pleasurable things.[31] They have resigned from it and have fled to the desert and the wilderness and have secluded themselves in search of their Creator. So prevent them from being harmed, troubled, molested or attacked by any of your people, and command them that no *kharāj* or *jizya* be taken from them, because they have rejected this world | 160a and they care neither for women nor for children, nor for money. They do not seek any of this at all. And I also desire from you that you order them that none of the Christians be oppressed or wronged. {15.3} If you take care of this, I expect that God will lengthen your rule and make your power last.'

{15.5} He said to me: 'It is my duty to order my people not to take *jizya* or *kharāj* from monks, to respect them and to fulfill their needs and to care for their circumstances.[32] And I will demand from them, with regard to all the Christians, that they do not to act unjustly towards them, and that their ceremonies will not be changed, and that their churches will be built, and that their heads will be raised, and that they will be advanced and treated justly. And whoever oppresses one of them—I will be his adversary on the day of the resurrection.'

And I said to him: 'May God recompense you and bless you with what He has granted you, as you have spoken as befits you'.

{16} Then he said to me: 'One difficulty remains. How will my family and my people accept me and approve of my being their king, while I am, in their view, contemptible and poor, since I am an orphan, living with my uncle Abū Ṭālib?'

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[31] Baḥīrā's description of Christians and monks in particular echoes Q 5:82, which praises the humility of Christians. In {16.18} below, the monk is said to have written this verse. For its *tafsīr*, see Ch. 2, p. 43; for its function in the *Legend*, see Ch. 4, pp. 113–121.

[32] For Muḥammad's promise to give monks a tax exemption, see Ch. 4, pp. 114–120.

فقلت له ادعي النبوه اولا[1] بديا[2] فهي[3] تفتح لك الباب *وتدخل الدار فادا انت دخلت كنت المخير[4] فهو اصلح لك وارشد واصوب[5] لانه قد تنبا[6] انبياء فقرا حقرا[7] ادنيا[8] متل داوود النبى الدي لم يكن في اخوته ⸢ادني منه ولا احقر[9] ولا افقر[10] وقبل[11] ولم *يكدب[12] ولم يخالف[13] وكدلك انت[14] ليس[15] | ⸢ احدا 160b يكدبك ولا يخالفك[16] ادا قلت اني[17] رسول الله[18] اليكم .

فقال[19] لي[20] كيف[21] يصدقوني وانا لا ⸢كتابا بيدي[22] .

{16.2} فقلت[23] له انا اعلمك[24] في الليل وتعرفهم[25] انت[26] في النهار وتقول[27] لهم ان[28] جبراييل يخبرني وانا اعرفكم بما يعلمني وقلت[29] ***له **علي *ان اكتب لك علي يدك[30] ما[31] تحتاج اليه ⸢واقول لك[32] كل مساله يسالونك عنها من معقول وغيره[33] والقنك[34] العلم والمسايل ان شيت من الكتب وان شيت من المعقول ان شا الله تعالي .

فقال لي[35] ابتدي واكتب[36] لي شئ اقوله[37] واتعلمه[38] .

{16.16} فكتبت[39] له بسم اللاهوت[40] الرحمن الرحيم اعني بدلك التالوت الموحد[41] القدوس لان *الاله[42] هو الاب[43] والنور الازلي والرحمن هو الابن الدي رحم[44] الشعوب واشتراهم بدمه المقدس[45] والرحيم هو الروح[46] القدس الدي سبغت[47] رحمته علي[48] الكل[49] وسكن في كل[50] المومنين *وعلمته اشياء تقربه[51] الي الايمان الصحيح[52] .

وكتبت له صوره محكمه مفصله[53] *كمالك[54] عزيز محتجب[55] .

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[1] < VW [2] < XY [3] i و W [4] المخبر فيا تريد ,VW المخبر Y [5] * < X [6] f ى VW [7] f ه V, حقيرين Y
[8] ادناء Y [9] ⸢ احقر منه X [10] Y ولا اصغر + [11] نبوته ,VW, < X, وقبلوه Y
[12] يكدبوه Y [13] يخالفوه Y [14] Y ايضا + [15] Y ثم + [16] ⸢ احدا يكدبه ولا يخالفه * ,Y احد يكدبك احدا ولا يخالف امرك ⸢ ,VW
[17] Y يخالف امرك ولا يكدبك [18] VW انني + [19] X ارسلني + ,VWY ارسلت
[20] < VW [21] i + ف Y [22] ⸢ اعرف كتابا VWXY [23] i < W اعرفك X
[24] < [25] X وعرفهم ,VW ما تعرفهم [26] لا نحملهم علي امرك ** Y [27] V وقول X [28] < VW, + ملاك الله Y [29] i ف VWX, ثم قلت Y
[30] X القمك [31] < Y [32] ⸢ وافيدك ,VW, القنك * ,Y انا افيدك X [33] < Y
[34] بجميع Y [35] < Y [36] i < VW [37] < X [38] i < X [39] فقلت VW [40] lege الله Y
[41] VWX الواحد [42] الله Y [43] VW الاب هو الاهوت * [44] + به كافة VW [45] < VWXY
[46] X سبقت ,VWY, ص i [47] XY روح [48] < VW [49] < Y [50] VW جميع [51] f < VW
[52] * < X [53] lege? مفضله X, < VW [54] كمال دلك [55] i + و W, * كامله تامه Y X

And I said to him: 'Claim prophethood first, as a beginning. That will open the door for you. You will enter the house and once you have entered you can choose for yourself. That is more beneficial and proper and fitting for you, because poor, wretched, lowly prophets have prophesied before, like the prophet David, none of whose brothers was lowlier, more wretched and poorer than him, and he was accepted, rather than disbelieved and contradicted. Likewise no one will | give 160b you the lie and oppose you when you say: "I am the apostle of God to you".'[33]

He said to me: 'How will they believe me, while I do not possess a book?'

{16.2} I said to him: 'I will teach you at night and you inform them during the day and say to them: "Gabriel informed me and I make known to you what he taught me".'

And I said to him: 'I will take it upon me to write for you what you need and to tell you about any given matter that they ask you about, be it reasonable or not. I will instruct you with knowledge and issues, be it from books or from reason, as you wish, God willing.'

Then he said to me: 'Begin and write something for me that I may say and teach'.

{16.16} And I wrote for him: '*In the name of the God, the Merciful, the Compassionate*'.[34] With this I mean the Holy Unified Trinity: 'God' is the Father and the Eternal Light, and 'the Merciful' is the Son, who is merciful to the peoples and has purchased them with his holy blood,[35] and 'the Compassionate' is the Holy Spirit whose compassion is bestowed amply on all and who dwells in all believers'.[36] And I taught him things that brought him close to the true faith.

And I wrote for him: '*A most excellent ingenious form like a veiled mighty king*'.[37]

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[33] Cf. Q 7:158.

[34] This is the *Basmala*, i.e. the opening words of the Qur'an and of all *sūra*s except *sūra* 9.

[35] Cf. Acts 20:28.

[36] Although it may sound distinctly Islamic, Arabic-speaking Christians used the *Basmala* as well, not only in the context of their apologetics vis-à-vis Islam, but also in other writings, including the Bible. For example several copies of the Old Testament from Mount Sinai begin with these words; 'Aṭiyya, *al-Fahāris al-taḥlīliyya*, pp. 20–25.

[37] Cf. Q 47:20; for a discussion of the Christological interpretation of this partial quotation, see above, Ch. 5, pp. 140–145.

وكتبت له ⌜فيما كتبت[1] انا[2] انزلناه في ليلة القدر وما ادراك ما ليلة القدر ⌜ليلة القدر[3] اخير من الف شهر تنزل[4] الملايكه والروح فيها[5] بادن ربهم *⌜من كل امر[6] | سلام هي[7] حتي مطلع[8] الفجر اعني بدلك الليله المقدسه الجليله[9] التي 161a
نزلت فيها الملايكه وبشرت[10] الرعاه بميلاد السيد[11] المخلص في[12] بيت لحم[13] .
وكتبت له ايضا صبغة الله[14] المقدسه التي اصطبغها[15] السيد[16] من يوحنا الصابغ في نهر الاردن .
{16.17} وكتبت[17] ايضا[18] له مريم[19] ابنة يواقيم التي ⌜احصنت فرجها فنفخنا[20] فيه من روحنا فصدقت[21] بكلام[22] ربها[23] فكانت[24] من الشاهدين .
وكتبت له ايضا[25] يا يسوع المسيح اني[26] متوفيك ورافعك الي ومظهر[27] كفر[28] الدين[29] كفروا[30] الي يوم القيامه اعني بدلك موته[31] وصعوده[32] الي السماء وتعمده بالماء دون الدين[33] كفروا[34] **وانه[35] الان[36] جعل[37] *الدين اتبعوه[38]

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[1] ⌜ < X [2] اما Y [3] ⌜ < X [4] i < V, نزلت WX, ان نزلت Y [5] < Y [6] ⌜ < Y [7] *بسلام X
[8] i ي VW [9] العظيمه Y [10] وبشروا + X [11] المسيح + W [12] له المجد Y [13] يهودا + Y [14] lege +
ومن هو احسن من صبغه الله اعني بدلك الصبغه + ,VWX ومن احسن من الله صبغة واعني بدلك الصبغة
[15] اصبغها X [16] + المخلص Y [17] ثم اني كتبت Y [18] < VWXY [19] i + و Y [20] ⌜ crossed out
[21] i و Y [22] بكلمة Y [23] + وكتابه VW [24] i و VWXY [25] < VWX [26] انني VWX [27] f + ك
X
+ ,VW موت سيدنا عنا [31] Y بك + [30] f < V [29] من Y < VW, lege [28] ويظهرك ,X ومطهر ,W
XY عنا [33] f < VWY وعوده [32] Y به اعني بدلك طبيعتي المسيح اد قال + ,VWX به + [34] [35] f <
VWY [36] الاب VWY [37] كل + Y [38] i < VW

And amongst the things I wrote for him is: '*We sent him in the Night of Power. And what tells you what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. The angels and the spirit descend in it, with permission of their Lord, upon every command. | Peace it is until sunrise*'.[38] With this I mean 161a
the glorious holy night in which the angels descended and announced to the shepherds the birth of the Lord, the Redeemer, in Bethlehem.

And I also wrote for him: '*The immersion (ṣibgha) of God. And what is better than the immersion of God?*'.[39] With this I meant God's holy immersion with which the Lord was baptized at the hands of John the Baptist in the river Jordan.[40]

{16.17} And I also wrote for him: '*Mary, daughter of Joachim, who guarded her virginity. Then we blew in it from Our spirit and she believed in the words of her Lord and she became one of the witnesses*'.[41]

And I also wrote for him: '*O Jesus Christ, I will make thee die and raise thee to me, and I will purify you from those who disbelieve and I will place the ones who follow you above those who disbelieve until the day of judgement*'.[42] With this I mean his death and his ascent to heaven and his baptism with water,

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[38] Q 97.

[39] Q 2:138.

[40] Besides the more common *maʿmūdiyya*, *ṣibgha* is used for 'baptism' in Christian Arabic texts. See for example the ninth-century Melkite theological compendium *al-Jāmiʿ wujūh al-īmān*, fols. 107a–108b. The term is believed to go back to the Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac root *ṣ-b-ʿ*; Fahd, 'Ṣābiʾa' and Köbert, 'Zur Bedeutung von *ṣibġa*'. Qurʾanic exegetes generally equated the word with *fiṭra* or *dīn*, but some compared *ṣibgha* with the act of baptism. Al-Ṭabarī, for example, draws that parallel, subsequently explaining that God has wanted to distinguish Muslims from Christians and Jews by giving them His true *ṣibgha*, the one of '*millat Ibrāhīm*'; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 444. The Melkite apologist Peter of Bayt Raʾs alludes to the Christian reading of Q 2:138, by answering the question posed in this verse. He describes how Christians reach perfection and sinlessness through baptism and then explains: '*ṣibghat Allāh aḥsan al-ṣibghāt wa-afḍaluhā*', 'God's baptism is the best and the noblest': Eutychius, *The Book of Demonstration*, vol. 1, pp. 145–146 (t), vol. 2, pp. 117–118 (tr).

[41] * Q 66:12. The last word given here is *al-shāhidīn*, whereas in the Qurʾan it says *al-qāniṭīn*, 'the obedient'. It is ironic that the author of the *Legend* 'corrects' the Qurʾan, which in this verse and elsewhere calls Mary the daughter of ʿImrān, which is to say: the sister of Moses. This point was often criticized by non-Muslim polemicists against Islam. Now that Baḥīrā is supposedly writing the Qurʾan, the name appears as Christians would want to have it, suggesting that afterwards it has been changed; further below in the text ({16.26} and {18.67}) the monk indeed predicts the future corruption of the Qurʾan.

[42] Q 3:55. The part of the verse between scare brackets is missing in all manuscripts, most likely on account of a homoioteleuton. On the basis of the subsequent explanation by the monk one can see that this is supposed to be included.

وامنوا به فوق[1] الدين كفروا به[2] الي يوم القيامه بظهور[3] ملك الروم علي ملك اليهود وتسلطهم[4] عليهم[5] .
⌜وكتبت له ايضا ولما توفيتني كنت الرقيب عليهم[6] وكتبت له[7] ايضا ⌜علي الصلب[8] في يديك[9] اودع[10] روحي واسلم[11] روح ناسوته وصار الرقيب علي بيعته[12] وتلاميده[13] .
وكتبت له ايضا وما[14] ⌜قتلوه ولا صلبوه[15] ولكن[16] شبه لهم اعني بدلك ان[17] المسيح لم يموت[18] بجوهر اللاهوت بل انما[19] مات بجوهر[20] ناسوته[21] . لما
16ib ارادوا[22] يكسروا[23] ساقيه علي الصليب متل | اللصين شبه لهم انه ميت ليلا[24] يكسروا له عظم **ليتم ⌜الكتاب اد يقول[25] وعظم لا يكسر له .
{16.18} وكتبت له ايضا ولتجدن اقربهم[26] اليك موده الدين[27] قالوا انا نصاري ⌜ودلك ان منهم قسيسين ورهبان[28] وانهم[29] لا يستكبرون .

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[1] * < Y (hom) [2] ** < X (hom) [3] اعني بدلك ظهور Y [4] وتسليطهم VWX [5] < VW, f < X. At this point VWX have integrated a section which belongs to the end of the legend. It agrees with the text from the end of {18.12} (fol. 172 a) until {18.26} (fol. 172 b), that is to say from: من امر الملوك to وما اعلم ما في نفسك At the end of the text, at its proper location, they include this section once again. [6] ⌜ < XY (hom) (fol. 172 b) [7] + هدا VW [8] الصليب X, [9] يدك Y [10] اسلم X, ⌜ حين قال وهو علي عود الصليب يا ابناه VW, بمعني قول سيدنا يا اتباه [11] فانه اسلم Y [12] شعبه VWY [13] < X [14] i < XY [15] ⌜ ~ (321) VWXY [16] i < VW [17] + السيد Y [18] يمت VWY [19] انه VWXY [20] بطبيعة Y [21] الناسوت Y [22] + ان Y [23] i < X [24] + لا X [25] ⌜ قول الكتاب VW [26] اقرب VW [27] f < VW [28] ⌜ < VW [29] وهم VW

to the exclusion of those who disbelieve, and that He placed those who followed him and believed in him above those who disbelieve in him, until the day of the resurrection, by the victory of the Roman emperor over the king of the Jews and their dominion over them.

And I also wrote for him: '*And when You had made me die, You were the watcher over them*'.[43] This I also wrote for him with regard to the saying of our Lord: 'Father, in Your hands I entrust my spirit',[44] when he handed over the spirit of his humanity he became watcher over his church and his disciples.

And I wrote also for him: '*They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to appear to them*'.[45] With this I mean that Christ did not die in the substance of his divine nature but rather in the substance of his human nature.[46] When they wanted to break his legs on the cross like | the two robbers, it seemed to them that he had died, so that they 161b broke no bone of his, 'so that the scripture, saying "a bone in him they shall not break" would be fulfilled'.[47]

{16.18} And I also wrote for him: '*You will surely find the nearest of them in love to you those who say: "We are Christians". And that is because there are amongst them priests and monks and they are not proud.*'[48]

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[43] Q 5:117. Christian apologists often adduced this verse because they regarded it as proof of the fact that Christ had died, contrary to the assertion in Q 4:157–158 that the crucifixion was an illusion. Some *mufassirūn* solved this apparent conflict between the Qur'anic statements by stating that the words *fa-lammā tawaffaytanī* ('and when You had made me die') in Q 5:117 are referring to what will happen on the Day of Judgment, for which they find an argument in Q 5:119, which says: 'this is the day on which the truthful will profit from their truthfulness'. (See for example: al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 7, pp. 88–89).

[44] Luke 23:46.

[45] Q 4:157.

[46] This explanation, which is given in order to refute the most obvious meaning of the verse, i.e. that Christ did not die on the cross, features also in Paul of Antioch's and al-Ṣafī ibn al-'Assāl's apologies: Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, p. 73* (t), p. 180 (tr); Samir, 'La réponse d'al-Ṣafī', pp. 318–319 (t).

[47] John 19:36, referring to Psa 34:20.

[48] Q 5:82; a crucial verse, already alluded to in the above ({15.2}), which is often quoted in Arab Christian apologies as an overall defense against Muslim anti-Christian polemic. In *tafsīr* it is often taken as a reference to a limited group of Christians for example those who recognized Muḥammad's prophethood, but to the Christian apologists it stands for all. See McAuliffe, *Qur'ānic Christians*, pp. 204–239, and Ch. 2, p. 36.

⌜وكتبت له ايضا[1] ولتجدن اشدهم عداوه للدين امنوا اليهود والدين اشركوا *فرايته ⌜يتوهم ان الدين اشركوا[2] هم النصاري[3] *وكان[4] لا[5] يبين دلك[6] لي حيا[7] مني ولا[8] كنت اكشف له السر خوفا من جهل اصحابه فبينت له ان قريش هم المشركين[9] المستكبرين[10] .

وكتبت له ايضا[11] ان المشركين نجسين[12] فلا يقربون[13] البيت[14] عامهم[15] هدا لان قريش ⌜كانت تعبد[16] الاوتان داخل بيت مكه وهم مقيمين حوله يسجدون للاصنام فعلم ان المعني[17] لهم فنقلهم ومنعهم[18] من هناك تم[19] اكدت[20] عليه في المعني[21] .

*فكتبت[22] له[23] ادا لقيتم المشركين حول البيت فاطردوهم[24] واضربوهم وادا[25] قاتلوكم[26] فاقتلوهم[27] .

وكتبت[28] له ايضا ان[29] كان للرحمن ولدا فانا اول العابدين[30] ⌜فقدر هو انها[31] لعلة اخري يعني[32] اول الجاحدين وكتبت له ايضا اعرفه[33] ان العابدين ليس هم الجاحدين وليس الجاحدين[34] هم العابدين[35] .

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[1] ⌜ Y ان النصاري ليس هم الدين اشركوا ⌜ [3] (hom) VW > *[2] VWY وايضا كتبت له
هو يسمع +[4] Y المشركون[9] Y وما[8] Y وما تبين دلك حيلة *[7] VW >[6] VW و + i[5] VW لي
VW > VW[11] > VW[10] كانوا يعبدوا ⌜[16] VW عامتهم[15] Y يقتربون[13] Y الي +[14] VW, > Y انجاس VW, نجسنا[12]
Y ا f ا Y[17] VWY >[18] Y اني +[19] Y اخدت[20] Y[21] f ا Y[22] i و Y[23] f + م Y, * > VW[24] +
Y ف + i[29] W وان كنت[28] Y قاتلوهم[27] W قاتلوهم[26] Y ما +[25] VWY وادا راجموكم فاطردوهم
Y العابدون[35] Y الجاحدون[34] VW >[33] Y بدلك +[32] Y فانهم اخدوها ⌜[31] Y العابدون له[30]

And I also wrote for him: '*You will surely find that the strongest in enmity to those who believe are the Jews and those who are polytheists*'.[49] Then I saw that he presumed that 'those who are polytheists' are the Christians, but he did not make that clear to me, out of vicarious shame, as I had not revealed the mystery to him, fearing for the ignorance of his companions.[50] So then I explained to him that Quraysh are the haughty polytheists.

And I also wrote for him: '*The polytheists are unclean, and they should not approach the house after this year*',[51] because Quraysh were worshiping idols in the house of Mecca, and they were staying around it, bowing to graven images. So he learnt that the reference is to them, and thus he took them away and prevented them from going there. Then I assuredhim of its meaning, and I wrote for him: 'If you meet the polytheists around the house, chase them away and hit them and when they fight you, fight them'.[52]

And I wrote also for him: '*If the Merciful had a son, I would be the first of the worshipers*'[53] He inferred, however, that it meant 'the first of the deniers'. So I also wrote for him, to let him know that the worshipers

[49] Q 5:82 (in the Qur'an these words precede the previous quotation from the same verse).

[50] 'The mystery' must refer to the mystery of the Trinity. The reason why it is suggested that Muḥammad was feeling vicarious shame for his teacher is because he was assuming that the polytheists (or more precisely: 'those who attribute partners to God', the *mushrikūn*) were the Christians. See n. 52 below.

[51] * Q 9:28.

[52] Cf. Q 9:5, 2:191. The verse Q 5:82 is quoted in the above in order to show the Qur'anic distinction between *mushrikūn* and Christians. These additional quasi-quotations about *mushrikūn* are meant as additional proof that the Christians are not the polytheists of the Qur'an, as no Christian would have been worshiping in the Meccan sanctuary, nor does the Qur'an encourage physical attacks on Christians. The East-Syrian metropolitan Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046) used precisely this argumentation in his defense of Christian belief in *tawḥīd* on the basis of the Qur'an; Cheikho, 'Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣibīn: al-majlis al-thālith', pp. 120–121.

[53] Q 43:81.

{16.19} وكتبت[1] له[2] يا ايها الكافرون لا[3] اعبد ما | تعبدون[4] ⌜ولا انتم 162a
عابدون ما اعبد[5] ولا انا عابد[6] ما عبدتم *ولا انتم عابدين[7] ما اعبد[8] لكم
دينكم ولي دين[9] .
وكتبت له ايضا ادا تبايعتم فاشهدوا شاهدين منكم[10] اعني شهادة الاب[11]
والروح[12] القدس للابن[13] علي نهر الاردن بصوت سمعه[14] يوحنا الصابغ مع
جميع[15] الشعب القايم[16] بشهادة[17] الاقنومين للاقنوم باتفاق[18] وحدانية الجوهر
اله[19] ⌜ازلي واحد[20] حي ناطق .
وكتبت له ايضا[21] قالت[22] اليهود يد الله مغلوله فغلت[23] يدهم[24] ولعنوا بما
قالوا اعني بدلك قول اليهود في المسيح وهو علي[25] الصليب[26] خلص اخرين
ونفسه[27] لا[28] يقدر يخلص[29] انزل الان من علي[30] الصليب لنرى[31] ونومن .
ارادوا[32] به[33] الاستهزا *وضعف اليد وانه عاجز لا ⌜قدره له[34] .

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[1] اعبد[6] Y < [5] ⌜ VW ولا انا عابد ما عبدتم + [4] VW م i[3] Y ايضا قول + VW, [2] < VW فقلت
الابن + [11] Y بينكم[10] X < **, Y ي + f[9] VW < *, Y ولا انا عابد ما عبدتم + [8] Y عابدون[7] VW
باتفقا V, باتقان[18] VWX < i[17] VWXY < [16] VW شهادة[15] VW ة f[14] X < [13] Y وروح[12] X
ايديهم[24] VWXY < i[23] VWXY و + i[22] X < [21] VWXY ~ [20] ⌜ VWXY وVWY, + i[19] X < Y
Y ان كنت انت ابن الله + [29] Y م i[28] VWXY ولنفسه[27] Y اد + [26] VWXY عود + [25] VWXY
يقدر ان VW, يقدر ⌜[34] Y بهدا[33] Y وكان قصدهم W, و + i[32] XY ا f, VW لكي نري[31] Y < [30]
Y به اي انه خلص قصير اليد لا يستطيع خلاص داته * X, ينزل

are not the deniers and the deniers are not the worshipers,[54] {16.19} and I wrote for him: '*O unbelievers, I do not worship what | you worship and* 162a *you are not worshiping what I worship, and I am not worshiping what you have worshiped, and you are not worshiping what I worship. You have your religion and I have mine*'.[55]

And I also wrote for him: '*When you make a deal let witnesses from amongst you witness*'.[56] I mean the witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Son at the River Jordan, through the voice which John the Baptist heard,[57] with all the people who advocate the testimony of the two hypostases to the one hypostasis through the uniformity of the oneness of the substance, the Eternal, One, Living, Rational God.

And I also wrote for him: '*The Jews say: "God's hand is fettered". Their hand is fettered and they are cursed for what they said*'.[58] With that I mean the words of the Jews about Christ when he was on the cross 'He saved others and himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the cross now so that we will see and believe'.[59] With this they wanted to mock him and show that he was weak and powerless.

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[54] This cryptic explanation alludes to a discussion in *tafsīr*. Because the verse is—at face value—if not an admission of the existence of divine sonship, at least an admission of its potentiality, the *mufassirūn* felt the need to adjust its meaning. One of the ways in which they did this by saying that *'abida* means 'to deny', 'to reject' (see for example: Abū Ubayda, *Kītāb al-majāz*, vol. 2, pp. 206–207). The monk's exegesis is, then, a refutation of that proposed reading. This verse already features in one of the eighth-century Christian Arabic apologies of which papyrus fragments survived (see above: Ch. 5, pp. 132–133), as well as in the *Debate of Theodore Abū Qurra and al-Ma'mūn*. In these texts it is presented as a confirmation of the existence of the Son of God: Graf, 'Christlich-arabische Texte', pp. 12–13 (ttr); Dick, *Mujādalat Abī Qurra*, p. 87 (t).

[55] Q 109; this short *sūra* is adduced for different purposes in two of the Arab Christian apologies. In the view of al-Kindī it confirms that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (Q 2:256), and he uses it to condemn Muslim violence against non-Muslims (Tien, *Risālat al-Kīndī*, p. 111, Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 221–222 (tr)). Paul of Antioch, on the other hand, contrasts this verse with Q 42:15 and Q 29:46, which show the closeness of the People of the Book to Muslims, implying that the 'unbelievers' of Q 109 cannot be the People of the Book; Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, p. 65* (t), pp. 173–174 (tr)). Here the argument also seems to be that if this *sūra* was a proclamation of the monk it is proof of him, and other Christians, not being unbelievers.

[56] * Q 2:282.

[57] Cf. Matt 3:16–17, Mark 1:19–21, Luke 3:21–22, John 1:29–34.

[58] Q 5:64. See Ch. 5, p. 138, for its 'Christian tafsīr'.

[59] Cf. Matt 27:42, Mark 15:32.

*وكتبت له ايضا ان[1] كنت في شك مما[2] انزل عليك فسل[3] الدين[4] اوتوا[5] الكتاب من قبلك اردت بدلك تصحيح الانجيل المقدس من ⌜الكتب كلها[6] ⌜ولا يلحقه[7] نقص ممن[8] تهمه ولا يقاس[9] عليها[10] تغيير ولا تحريف[11] .

{16.20} وكتبت له ايضا واد[12] قال يسوع المسيح *للحواريين[13] من انصاري الي الله قالوا[14] الحواريون[15] نحن انصار الله فامنت طايفه من بني اسراييل وكفرت طايفه فايدنا الدين امنوا علي عدوهم | واصبحوا ظاهرين[16] اعني 162b بدلك انه لما[17] قال المسيح لتلاميده[18] من[19] تقولون[20] اني[21] انا[22] فقالوا انت هو المسيح ابن الله الحي فمدحهم وشكر[23] دلك[24] وسماهم *انصار الله وامنت به[25] طايفه من بني اسراييل وكفرت[26] طايفه[27] *فايدنا[28] الدين[29] امنوا علي عدوهم بعد دلك ⌜فاصحبوا ظاهرين[30] يوم قيامته من بين[31] الاموات[32] *تم بين[33] به الخلايق ورفعهم واظهر[34] ملكهم وسلطانهم علي الدين كفروا به الي يوم القيامه[35] .

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[1] i + و Y [2] i ب VW, من ما [3] VW, i سلوا Y [4] f < VW [5] VW يتلوا [6] ⌜ ساير الكتب Y [7] f + ا VW, ⌜ بغير Y [8] ولا Y [9] قياس Y [10] فيلحقها Y [11] * < X (hom) [12] f + ا VWX, i < Y [13] للحواريون Y [14] قال Y [15] * للحواريين X (hom), للحواريون VW (hom) [16] i ط WY [17] < Y [18] للتلاميد VW [19] f ا VWY [20] f ا VW, + انتم Y [21] VW انني [22] < Y [23] VW, وشكرهم علي [24] i + ل X, + لهم Y [25] < X به + X [26] * < VW [27] قيادا VW, lege فايد J [28] ل i [29] X وشكرهم امنت / VW امن ?lege [30] i ط W, ⌜ < X [31] VWX ارض VX, الموتا W الموتى [32] V, f < W [33] VW + لهم [34] * وامنت به الخلايق وحصل لهم علو المنزلة والرفعة دون غيرهم Y [35] VW

And I also wrote for him: '*If you are in doubt about what has been revealed to you, then ask those to whom the book was given before you*'.[60] With this I intended to prove that the Holy Gospel is truer than any book, and cannot be impaired by those who want to discredit it, nor can it be referred to in terms of falsification and corruption.[61]

{16.20} And I also wrote for him: '*When Jesus said to the disciples "who are my helpers unto God?" the disciples said: "we are the helpers of God" and a party of the Sons of Israel believed and a party disbelieved. And we supported those who believed against their enemies | and they became victorious*'.[62] With this I mean that when Christ said to his disciples 'Who do you say I am?' they said 'You are Christ, the son of the living God'.[63] And he praised them and thanked them for that, and called them 'Helpers of God' and a party of the Sons of Israel believed and a party disbelieved, and [He] supported those who believed against their enemies after that, and they became victorious on the day of his resurrection from the dead.[64] Then people [believed] in him and in his ascension, and He raised them high and made their kingdom and their might triumph over those who do not believe in him until the Day of the Resurrection.[65] 162b

[60] Q 10:94.

[61] The explanation is meant to refute the common Muslim accusation that Christians (and Jews) have tampered with their scriptures. This verse from the Qurʾan is very frequently adduced by Christians to that intent. The two terms used here, *taghyīr* and *taḥrīf*, are two of the technical terms used by Islamic scholars to refer to the alleged corruption of the Bible.

[62] Q 61:14, cf. Q 3:52–55.

[63] Cf. Matt 16:13–17, Mark 8:27–29, Luke 8:27–29, John 6:69.

[64] Cf. Q 3:55. The text has 'We supported', just as in the Qur'anic verse, instead of 'He supported' but since this is not a quotation the use of the first person does not make sense.

[65] In his 'exegesis' of the verse the monk says that the disciples testified that Christ was the Son of the living God, in order to make clear that it is on account of their belief in the divinity of Christ that the disciples are called 'Helpers of God' in the Qurʾan (and not, for example, 'helpers of Christ'). This honorary title of the disciples was used by the Christian apologists to prove that the Qur'an endorses their faith. Abraham of Tiberias adduces it as Qur'anic proof of their reliability in regard to the witnessing of the crucifixion and the preservation of Christ's Gospel (Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham*, pp. 390–397 (ttr)). Similarly argumentation can be found with Dionysius bar Ṣalībī and Paul of Antioch in their refutations of Islam (Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 97, p. 129, p. 135 (t), vol. 2, pp. 89–90, p. 123, p. 131 (tr); Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, p. 64* (t), p. 172 (tr)). It has to be noted that the Arabic root n-ṣ-r, from which *Anṣār*, 'helpers' is taken, means 'helping' in the sense of 'rendering victorious', which explains why the support of the disciples for Christ is brought into relation with the political triumph over the Jews.

*واشيا لا تحصي[1] كتبتها له[2] اطلب بها[3] الميل الي ايمان[4] الحق[5] والشهاده بمجي المسيح الي العالم وتكديب *ايضا[6] اليهود[7] فيما يدعوه[8] علي سيدنا[9] المسيح الحقاني[10] .

{16.21} فقال[11] لي[12] كيف ابتدي اعمل بينهم[13] دينا وشريعه .

فقلت له لا بد لك مما[14] تفرض عليهم فروضا *وتسننن[15] لهم سننا[16] تكون خفيفه سهله[17] فقال لي ان اصحابي عرب[18] باديه جفاه لم يعتادوا صوما[19] ولا صلاه ولا شيء يتعبهم ⌜ولا يوديهم[20] .

فقلت له ليس يستوي لك[21] امرا[22] ولا يتم لك حال الا بان[23] تبتدي تاخدهم بالصوم والصلاه وتقيم عليهم[24] رسوما ⌜حتي يعلموا[25] ويتيقنوا انك نبي مرسل اليهم تامر[26] وتنهي[27] وشريعه[28] معلومه *ليلا يتقوي[29] بعضهم علي بعض ويتقدي[30] | بما لا يجب والا فليس تقوم[31] لك مملكه[32] ولا يستقيم[33] 163a لك امرا ولا يتبت[34] لك حال[35] .

{16.9} فقال لي ⌜ارايت ان[36] امرتهم[37] بالصوم والصلاه[38] وهم لا يطيقونه[39] كيف[40] اعمل وليس يتهيا لي ⌜ان اكرههم[41] .

فقلت له تقول[42] صوموا[43] من[44] غدوه[45] الي الليل وكلوا[46] من اول الليل الي غدوه حتي ⌜يتبين لكم[47] الخيط[48] الابيض من الخيط الاسود ⌜من الفجر[49] .

{16.12} فقال لي ارايت[50] ان امرتهم[51] بالصلاه وهم لا يطيقونها[52] ⌜لانهم لم يعتادوا[53] فكيف اعمل .

فقلت له تصفهم ⌜صفا صفا[54] وراك ⌜وانت قد امامهم[55] وادا كتروا[56] صفوفا فتقدم[57] انت امامهم[58] تصلي[59] بهم فادا انت[60] نكست راسك نكسوا[61]

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[1] f ا W [2] * ~ [3] f < Y وكتبت له اشياء كثيرة لاتحصي [4] XY الايمان [5] i + ب XY [6] < VWX [7] ثم انه قال [8] Y بدعوه [9] + XY يدعونه W, بدعوا به V, [10] VW يسوع [11] X > ,VWY الاله الحقيقي [12] + Y عرفني [13] VWY, بهم X [14] lege? ان X, i < Y [15] f < VWY [16] * < X [17] و + i [18] < VWXY [19] i + ب VW [20] ⌜ < X [21] < X الامر Y [22] i < VWX لهم [23] VWXY [24] + Y بهم [25] ⌜ Y ثم تجعل لهم شريعة ?lege [26] و + i Y فيعلموا [27] lege يعتدي VW/ يعتدي [28] Y يستقيم [29] Y يتم [30] Y رايه VW, رتبه [31] i ي VWY [32] < VWY يقتدي ? lege [33] Y يقضونه [34] i + ف Y [35] < VWY امرهم [36] ⌜ < Y [37] VWX اكراههم [38] < X * ,VW [39] Y ويا كلوا [40] i ع Y [41] ⌜ Y يصوما [42] f ا Y قول لهم ان X, لهم + VW, [43] Y قول لهم [44] VWX [45] X يطيقواها [46] VW امرهم [47] ⌜ < X [48] < X, i ف Y [49] ⌜ < XY [50] Y الخيض [51] Y يبان [52] lege ⌜ < VWXY [53] V كتر [54] Y ثم اتقدم VWX, فاتقدم [55] Y صفوفا صفوفا [56] X قدامهم [57] i و [58] Y هم + W, [59] f ن V, ينكسون [60] < VWX [61] Y و VW, f

Innumerable things I wrote for him with which to try to make him incline toward the faith of truth and the confession of the coming of Christ to the world and also |to make him| denounce the Jews regarding what they allege against our Lord, the True Messiah.

{16.21} And he said to me: 'How do I begin to make a religion and a law (*sharīʿa*) among them?'

And I said to him: 'It is crucial for you [to] impose religious duties on them and to prescribe an easy, uncomplicated way of life (*sunna*) to them'.

And he said to me: 'My companions are rough Bedouin Arabs. They are not accustomed to fasting and praying or to anything that tires or troubles them'.

And I said to him: 'You will not succeed or achieve anything if you do not begin to impose fasting and prayer on them and to set up rituals for them, so that they will learn and know for sure that you are a prophet, who is sent to them and who commands and prohibits. [Then you make] a fixed law for them, so that they will not fight each other and [follow] that | which is not proper. Otherwise no kingdom will be 163a established for you, and you will not accomplish or secure anything'.

{16.9} He said to me: 'Do you think I should order them to fast and pray, even though they cannot stand it? Considering that I am not in a position to force them, how should I act?'

And I said to him: 'Say to them: "*Fast from the early morning until the night, and eat from the beginning of the night until the morning, until you can distinguish a white thread from a black thread at dawn*".'[66]

{16.12} And he said to me: 'Do you think I should order them to pray, even though they cannot stand it, because they are not used to it? What should I do?'

So I said to him: 'Put them in rows behind you. And when they make up many rows, you should pray in front of them, and when you bend your head they will bend their head, and when you raise your

[66] * Q 2:187.

رووسهم[1] *وادا انت[2] رفعت[3] رفعوا رووسهم[4] وادا سجدت سجدوا وادا قمت قاموا فانهم[5] يتعلمون[6] ويعتادون[7] **وهدا ليس فيه[8] تعب ولا[9] نصب فيكون[10] التعب *علي الدي[11] بين ايديهم[12] وترسم[13] لهم[14] تلته[15] ركعات في كل صلاه ليلا يضجروا[16] فيهربوا .

*ورسمت[17] له[18] كل امور صلاه[19] تالوتا[20] وعلمته ⸢في الصلاه[21] كيف يصلي وجعلت بدايتها[22] تالوتا[23] اول ما يقوم[24] للصلاه[25] ⸣يبسط يديه ويقيمها عند ادنيه[26] تحقيقا للتالوت *وراس[27] الايمان تم جعلت كل ركعه تتليت[28] في صلاته[29] ينكس راسه ويرفعها[30] ⸢تم يخر[31] في[32] الارض | ويجلس[33] ويسجد 163b ويقوم وايضا[34] حققت[35] تحقيق التالوت[36] الموحد عند تمام *صلاته[37] يحول وجهه الي يمينه ويقول[38] السلام عليكم ورحمة الله[39] *وبرهنت دلك[40] في القول[41] اللهم انك السلام ومنك السلام واليك السلام يعني[42] الاب والابن والروح القدس اله[43] واحد[44] **كلمته وروحه منه واليه *والابن[45] منه مولود واليه[46] يعود والروح[47] القدس[48] منبتق معه[49] ومتفق[50] .

تم قلت له ليس يجوز[51] صوم ولا صلاه الا بالطهور[52] والاغتسال بالماء الطاهر .

*فقال لي وكيف هو ⸢الطهور والاغتسال[53] بالماء الطاهر[54] فعلمني[55] اياه .

*فقلت له[56] الطهر[57] الكبير[58] وهو[59] محتجب محجوب فجد[60] في الطهور[61] القريب[62] الموجود عند كل صلاه .

فقال لي صف[63] لي كيف هو[64] .

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[1] WY روسهم [2] < VWX [3] lege + X راسك [4] < VW, * < Y [5] VWXY فهم [6] Yيتعلموا هدا [7] VW, f ا Y ويتعودون [8] ⸢ VWY وليس هم في [9] + VW في [10] VWY فيملون من [11] f + W ن [12] VW, * وعلمهم < X, ** < Y [13] Y وارسم [14] < VW [15] + im, اربعه VY, f < W تلات [16] يفجروا Y [17] i ف VW, واني رسمت Y [18] f + VW م [19] VW, صلاته Y ثلاثه [20] + VW تالوتا [21] V, lege ⸢ < Y كل صلاه [22] VW, ابتدا صلاته Y ابتدا [23] * < X [24] X, Y يقيم i ت الي الصلاه [25] Y [26] ⸢ X تبسط يديك وتقيمها عند ادنيك [27] i < Y [28] i + VW ب [29] Yصلا [30] f < Y [31] i W, i ا Y [32] Y علي [33] i ت W [34] i < V [35] + W له [36] * < X (hom) [37] Y الصلاه وانه [38] * Y [39] lege? + X صلاتك تحول وجهك الي يمينك وتقول ثم يحول وجهه الي شماله ويقول كدلك وقدام ايضا [40] < VW وبراكاته ثم يحول وجهه الي شماله ويقول السلام عليكم ورحمة الله + Y, J [41] X وتقول * [42] i ا [43] Y اعني بدلك X, [44] VW الاله [45] i < Y [46] * < VW (hom) [47] Y وروح [48] lege [49] lege i + VWY و [50] lege i < VWY, ** < X [51] VWX, < Y يتم [52] V بالظهور [53] ⸣ [54] * < X (hom) W [55] i < VWXY [56] + VW كيف [57] VWY الطهور [58] VW الكتير [59] هو بعيد [60] Y [61] V الظهور [62] i + VW ب [63] i + ا Y [64] * < X (hom) VW, فهو بعيد متجد

head they will raise their heads, and when you bow down they will bow down and when you get up they will get up, so that they will learn and become accustomed. This is not tiring or exhausting, since the burden is only on the one who is in front of them. Prescribe three Rakʿa's to them for every prayer, so that they do not get displeased and go away'.

I designed all the matters of the prayer in a threefold manner and told him how to pray. I made its beginning threefold: when one gets up to pray one flattens the hand and puts it at both ears, as a confirmation of the Trinity and the main principle of the faith. Then I made all Rakʿas threefold in his prayer: bending one's head, raising it and then prostrating. | Then sitting, prostrating and rising. And I also confirmed 163b
the Unified Trinity at the end of his prayer, turning one's face to the right, and saying "Peace upon you, and God's mercy", |then turning one's face to the left, saying the same, and then to the front as well|. I demonstrated this in the saying "O God, You are peace, and from You is peace and to You is peace", which means: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, his Word and His Spirit from Him and to Him, the Son born from Him and returning to Him, and the Holy Spirit emanating from Him and uniform with Him.[67]

Then I said to him: 'It is not permissible to fast and pray except after cleansing and washing with clean water.'

And he said to me: 'How does one do the cleansing and washing with clean water? Please teach me this'.

And I said to him: 'The greater purity is veiled, concealed, so strive earnestly for the simple purity that is present with every prayer'.[68]

And he said to me: 'Describe to me how it is done'.

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[67] A parallel is drawn here between the *taslīma*s at the end of the *ṣalāt* (see Monnot, 'Ṣalāt') and the doxology in Christian prayer which addresses the three persons of the Trinity separately with the word 'peace'. See for example: Kropp, *Ausgewählte Koptische Zaubertexte*, vol. 3, pp. 232–233.

[68] This comment, which is first of all meant to explain how a Christian could impose ritual cleansing with water, even though it is not a tradition in Christianity, is also an indirect defense of the lack of ritual purification in Christianity. Abraham of Tiberias elaborates on this issue in order to prove that Muslim ablutions are superficial and have no real spiritual value: Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 432–439 (ttr).

فقلت له تجعل الاناء عن يمينك *وتمسح بالماء[1] راسك وداخل ادنيك وداخل فيك[2] اردت بدلك[3] متال التالوت .
*¬تم قلت[4] له هدا الطهور بقي[5] الاغتسال وليس هدا[6] الاغتسال الكامل ولا الطهر[7] الكامل كما كان[8] قد[9] سبق من قولي بديا[10] .
قال[11] وما[12] هدا الاغتسال ايضا عرفني .
فقلت له تغسل وجهك ويديك[13] ورجليك[14] اردت بدلك[15] متال التالوت[16] .
*تم[17] قال[18] لي فكم[19] افرض عليهم ¬من صلاه[20] في كل يوم[21] ¬وهم قوم لم يعتادوا | بصلاه[22] . 164a
فقلت له افرض عليهم سبع[23] صلوات في كل يوم متلما[24] النصاري [25]يقروا[26] *لكل صلاه مزمور كبير بتلتة[27] تمجيدات وترويحيه[28] تم يجتمعون[29] للصلاه بكترة السجود والوتر[30] .
فقال لي[31] ما[32] يطيقون[33] ولا يقدرون[34] ¬ولا يطيعوني[35] ولا يقبلون مني متل هدا[36] كله {16.22} قلت[37] له فصير[38] لهم الصلاه تلاته[39] دفعات[40] بركوع[41] *ولا تزيد عليها ولا تنقص منها كما وصفت[42] لك[43] ¬ولكن تكون[44] سبع[45] صلوات[46] *¬في سبع[47] اوقات[48] يعرفونها[49] اولها قبل الصبح *بتلاتة[50] ساعات[51] يقال لها عندنا صلاة[52] سحر واسمها[53] لهم[54] صلاة الفجر والتانيه[55] اول ساعه من النهار *يقال لها عندنا الصلاه[56] الاولي[57] تسميها[58] انت لهم[59] صلاة[60]

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[1] + على شعر VWX [2] فمك W, * [3] وتاخد من الماء ثم تسبح علي شعر راسك وداخل فمك Y < X i
[4] فقلت < ¬ Y [5] ففي VW, ن i Y [6] الطهور Y < Y [7] < VWY [8] < VW [9] لك اولا Y [10] + i
[11] ايضا + VW [12] < VW i و [13] وتغسل يديك VWY [14] وتغسل رجليك VWY [15] < X *
[16] انه + Y [17] فقال * X [18] و i VWX, i < Y [19] < X ¬ [20] متلما النصارى يقرون + VW
[21] صلاه متلما النصارى يقرون + X (ditt) [22] في صلاه Y, ¬ < X i < VW, (ditt) [23] ة + f VWX [24] +
[25] ثم يمجدون + VW, Y [26] ن f VWX, i ت Y [27] بتلات VWY [28] وتريحه فانهم + Y [29] i
[30] < Y, * < X تعمل [31] انهم + Y [32] ل i Y [33] ا f هدا + X, Y [34] عليه + X, ا f Y [35] < Y, ¬ < f
[36] التقل + Y [37] ف + i XY [38] قصر VWX [39] ثلث V, تلته W, f < XY [40] دفوع Y [41] lege
[42] وضعت VW [43] < X * [44] تكن VWX, ¬ ولتكن Y [45] ة + f VWX [46] <
[47] لسبعة ¬ XY [48] < VW * بثلث [50] W, f < Y [51] < X * [52] < Y [49] ت i يعرفوها VW, XY
[53] وسميها VW, فسميها انت X, Y [54] + انت VW [55] وتانيه VWX, i < Y [56] < Y [57] f
ه Y, * < VWX [58] ف i VWX, ا i Y [59] < Y [60] < X

And I said to him: 'Take a vessel in your right hand and wash your head with water and the inside of your ears and the inside of your mouth'. This I intended as a symbol of the Trinity. And I said to him: 'This is the cleansing. The washing still remains, because this is not the full washing and the full cleansing as I have told you before, in the beginning'.

He said: 'What is that washing? Teach it to me, too'.

And I said to him: 'Wash your face and your hands and your feet'. This I intended as a symbol of the Trinity.

Then he said to me: 'How many prayers do I prescribe them per day, considering that they are people who are not accustomed | to praying?' 164a

And I said to him: 'Prescribe seven prayers per day to them, just like the Christians. Let them read with every prayer a great psalm with three homilies and a [nocturnal prayer], next they should congregate for prayer with much prostration and *witr*.'[69]

And he said to me: 'They are not capable of this and they do not have the strength for this. They will not obey me or accept all these kinds of things from me'.

{16.22} And I said to him: 'Make the prayer for them so as to have three times a Rakʿa, and do not exceed it or shorten it, just as I described to you. But there should be seven prayers at seven times, which they should know. The first one is three hours before dawn. With us it is called 'the prayer of daybreak'. Call it for them 'the sunrise prayer'. The second is at the first hour of the day. With us it is called 'the first prayer'. Call it for them 'the morning prayer'. And the third is at the third hour of the day. With us it is called 'the third prayer'.

[69] The term translated as 'nocturnal prayer' appears in the manuscript as *tarwīḥiyya*, which is probably a misspelling for *tarwīḥa*, a special prayer during the nights of Ramadan (Wensinck, 'Tarāwīḥ'). *Witr* is another nocturnal prayer which is not obligatory and which generally consists of three Rakʿa's (Monnot, 'Ṣalāt'; Wensinck, 'Witr').

الصبح ⌜والتلاته عندنا في تالت ساعه من النهار[1] تسميها[2] انت لهم صلاة الضحا[3] *والرابعه[4] في[5] سادس[6] ساعه[7] من النهار ⌜يقال لها[8] عندنا السادسه سميها[9] لهم صلاة الظهر[10] *والخامسه[11] عندنا[12] في تسع[13] ساعات[14] ⌜من النهار[15] ⌜يقال لها[16] عندنا[17] التاسعه سميها[18] انت لهم صلاة العصر *والسادسه[19] اخر[20] النهار تسما[21] عندنا[22] صلاة الغروب سميها[23] انت لهم صلاة المغرب[24] *والسابعه[25] بعد المساء[26] وهي[27] عندنا[28] صلاة النوم[29] اسميها[30] انت لهم صلاة العشاء[31] .

فقال لي[32] اي[33] موضع[34] امرهم[35] يحولون[36] وجوههم ⌜وهم حول البيت يصلون للاصنام[37] .

فقلت له[38] اجعلهم[39] يصلون الي ⌜مشرق الشمس[40] لان[41] منه يشرق كل نور | وكل مصباح وكل كوكب منه *يجري[42] ويسير[43] وتحته جنة عدن الفردوس[44] التي[45] تجري من تحتها الانهار[46] . 164b

*تم قلت له امرهم[47] بدق الناقوس لتعرف الناس ⌜المجي الي[48] الصلاه فيقبلون[49] اليك[50] افواجا[51] .

{16.23} تم[52] رجع الي[53] ** *ودكر[54] انه[55] قد امرهم بالسجود الي الشرق[56] والصلاه اليه فقاموا عليه وقالوا له[57] لا نطاوعك وندع قبلتنا التي[58] نعرفها نحن وابانا[59] من قبلنا ونصلي الي غيرها[60] *وشعتوا[61] علي[62] .

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[1] lege ⌜ وتلات ساعه من النهار يقال لها ,VW وتالته في تلات ساعات من النهار يقال لها عندنا صلاه التالته
[2] VWX, i ا Y والثالثه تكون في ثلاث ساعات من النهار يقال لها عندنا الثالثه ,X عندنا التالته فسميها انت[9] Y تسما ⌜[8] VWY ساعات[7] VWY سته[6] X > *[5] VW ورابعه[4] Y الصحي[3]
X وتاسع ساعه *[14] V ه + f[13] Y تكون[12] VW وخامسه[11] Y الضهر[10] Y اسميها انت ,VWX
وسادسه في اتنى[19] Y فاسميها ,VWX فسميها[18] VWX صلاه +[17] Y وهي تسما ⌜[16] VW > ⌜[15]
صلاه يقال لها[21] Y تكون في اثني عشر ساعة من[20] W وصلاة السادسه في اتنى عشر ساعه ,V عشر ساعه
العشا[24] Y فاسميها ,VWX فسميا[23] X > W واتنى عشر ساعه من النهار يقال لها * ,Y وهي ,VW
العشا[29] X يقال لها +[28] VWY, * واخر النهار يقال لها[27] Y العشاء[26] VW وسابعه[25] VW
ادا صلوا[33] Y الي +[32] VWXY العتمه[31] Y ف + i فسميها[30] VWX, اعني صلاة الستار + ,X
لاى[41] VW جهه[34] Y انهم + ,VW ان +[35] Y ا f[36] Y للصلاه ⌜[37] X م + f[38] Y > X[39] ⌜[40]
W انهار ماء الحياة ,V انهار المياه[46] X الدي[45] Y > X[44] * > X[43] V ت i[42] Y > i[41] X المشرق
فراحا ,V اقراحا[51] Y من كل موضع +[50] X ا f ,W ليقبلوا ,V ليقتلوا[49] Y وقت ⌜[48] VW ت + i[47]
W, * < X, + افواجا[52] Y انه +[53] VWX وقتا اخر +[54] VW ي i[55] VW م + f[56] المشرق
V < VW,*[57] X وقال لي قد امرتهم بالصلاه الى الشرق فقاموا علي وقالوا لي[58] WX الدي[59] واباونا
وقال لي قد امرتهم بالسجود الى الشرق بالصلاه اليه فقاموا علي ولم يطيعوا دلك وقالوا انهم ما **[60] VWX
ه + ?lege, * < X, VW لدلك +[62] X وقد شعتوا[61] Y يخلوا قبلتهم التي يعرفونها هم واباوهم ابدا

Call it for them 'the forenoon prayer'. And the fourth is at the sixth hour of the day. We call it 'the sixth'. Call it for them 'the noon prayer'. And the fifth is with us at the ninth hour of the day. It is called 'the ninth' with us. Call it for them 'the afternoon prayer'. And the sixth is at the end of the day. It is called 'the prayer of sundown' with us. Call it for them 'the sunset prayer'. The seventh is after the evening. With us it is 'the prayer of sleep'. Call it for them 'the evening prayer' '.[70]

And he said to me: 'To which place do I command them to turn their faces, as they are praying now around the House to the idols?'

And I said to him: 'Make them pray to the place where the sun rises, because from there all light and brightness radiates | and every star 164b moves and proceeds from there. And below it is the garden of Eden, Paradise, from below which rivers flow'.

Then I said to him: 'Order them to beat the sounding-board to inform the people that they should come to prayer, so that they will come to you in crowds'.[71]

{16.23} Then he returned to me and mentioned that he had ordered them to prostrate themselves and pray to the East, but they stood up against him saying to him: 'We will not obey you and abandon the Qibla that we and our forefathers have known, to pray to another one'. And they rebelled against [him].

[70] The purpose of listing these prayers in full is to show that Muslims indeed reach the amount of seven when they add up all the existing names for their prayers, rather than five which is the daily number of prescribed prayers, according to Muslim tradition. The number of seven is reached because two of the names are in fact synonymous (*ṣalāt al-fajr* and *ṣalāt al-ṣubḥ*), while the *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā*, a prayer that can be performed between sunrise and midday, belongs to the supererogatory prayers (*nawāfil*); Monnot, 'Ṣalāt'.

[71] Obviously, Muslims do not use the sounding-board (*nāqūs*) for their call to prayer. The redactor of ES therefore claims that Kaʿb al-Aḥbār replaced this custom later with the *adhān*.

فقلت له قول لهم قد امرني[1] الله ان[2] تصلوا[3] الي[4] مكه[5] *فصلي[6] معهم اليها[7] .
تم[8] رجع[9] وقال لي[10] كم[11] افرض عليهم *¬ان يصوموا وهم لا يقدرون علي الصوم[12] .
فقلت له افرض عليهم شهرا[13] ليتبتوا عليه[14] ويعرفوه[15] .
*فقال[16] لي[17] ما[18] ¬يعرفون الشهر ولا[19] يدرون متي[20] اوله ¬ولا متي[21] اخره **لانهم[22] باديه بما[23] *اعتادوا ¬به ولا يحسبون[24] .
فقلت له قول لهم صوموا[25] علي روية[26] الهلال وافطروا علي رويته[27] حتي لا تحتاجون[28] الي عددا ولا الي[29] حساب .
{16.24} **وعرفته[30] اشياء[31] *وعرفته امور[32] واوقفته[33] علي[34] اسباب[35] وحرصت ان[36] *يكون[37] مايلا[38] الي الايمان[39] المستقيم[40] والي الحق المبين[41] اليقين[42] والي الايمان الصحيح المنير[43] واكدت[44] عليه[45] في امر سيدنا وربنا[46] المسيح[47] ومجيه وانه[48] ¬كلمة الله وروحه[49] .
¬ومن التاكيد اني[50] كتبت[51] له | يا مريم ان الله يبشرك منه *بكلمه[52] اسمه[53] 165a المسيح واكدت[54] في الكتاب مجيه الي *العالم[55] وتجسده من مريم العدري وانها اقامت[56] بعد ولادتها[57] عدري[58] ليكون[59] ¬شاهد للنصاري[60] بمجيه[61] الي الارض[62] واظهاره الايات والمعجزات[63] ¬من اقامة الموتي[64] وصعوده الي السماء[65] اد كان[66] له[67] دلك[68] من الانبياء النبوات *ومن الرسل[69] البينات[70]

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[1] اغمرني X [2] ب + i X [3] < W [4] بيت + VWXY [5] فقبلوه لدلك + VW [6] وصلا + V, i و WY [7] الى
[8] انه + Y بيت مكه VW [9] الي + VW, وعاد الي + Y, * قلت له ايضا انت تامرهم بدق الناقوس لتعرف
X الناس المجي الي الصلاه فقال لي ما معتادين الى دلك ولا يطاعوني لاكن انا اقيم رجلا يدعيهم الي الصلاه
[10] < Y ايام + VW, i ف + Y صيام ¬ [12] Y واحد + [13] Y, * من صوم VW, الشهر X [14] فيه
[15] ويعرفونه Y [16] ن X ثم انه قال [17] Y لانهم * VWX [18] لم VW, i ف + Y [19] ¬ < X
يحسبون ولا ¬ [24] lege i < VWY [23] ادهم قوما VW [22] من Y, ¬ متا يكون Y [21] يكون + [20]
[25] ويعرفون حسابا * VW, يعرفون عدد الايام شهر واحد وادا صمتم صوموا + Y, ** < X [26] ا f VW
[27] روية الهلال Y [28] ا f VW [29] < X ثم اني عرفته [30] Y كثيره + VW, الاشيا كلها [31] Y الامور [32]
*[38] VWمقبلا + [37] Y بانه VW, لا + [36] Y عده + [35] Y واوضحت له * [34] VW تم اوقفته [33] W
وتاكد [44] X < ** Y, ولم اقدر + [43] VWY < [42] VW المنير [41] Y ه + f [40] VWY الطريق [39] Y يميل
[49] ¬ Y واثبتته عنده انه [48] VW وتجسده + [47] Y يسوع VWX, يسوع + [46] X م + f [45] Y واخدت X,
[54] < X بكلمته * [53] Y بكلمته الدي [52] X و + i [51] ¬ < X, انني [50] X روح الله وكلمته
ولادها هكدا + V, ولادها هكدا عدرى + [59] W ه f [58] W ولادها [57] VW ولادها هكدا [56] i < X [55] VWX الارض
العالم [62] VW في مجيه [61] VW شاهدا لنا لما اعتمدوا عليه النصرانيه من الايمان به ¬ X, ة + f [60] W عدره
السموات [65] X واقامته من الاموات ¬ VWY, الاموات [64] VWX والعجايب [63] VW, * < Y (hom)
VWX ما [66] Y [67] lege + من Y, or the reading in the following footnote [68] i + ب X [69] +
الجميع VW [70] * < Y

So I said to him: 'Say to them: "God has ordered me to pray to Mecca" and pray in that direction with them'.[72]

Then he returned to me and said to me: 'How much fasting do I impose on them, considering that they are not capable of it?'

And I said to him: 'Impose a month on them so that they can hold on to that and know it'.

And he said to me: 'They do not know what a month is, and they do not realize when it begins or ends, because they are Bedouins. They are not used to it and they do not count'.

So I said to him: 'Say to them: "begin the fast when the new moon appears and break the fast when it appears, so that you do not need numbering or counting".'[73]

{16.24} And I taught him various issues and matters and explained the background to him, and I strove to make him incline towards the correct belief and to the clear and indisputable truth and to the true luminous belief. And I assured him of the situation of our Master and Lord Christ and his coming, and of his being the Word of God and His Spirit.

As a confirmation of this I wrote for him: | '*O Mary! God gives you* 165a
*tidings of a Word, whose name is Christ*'.[74] And in the book I confirmed his coming to the world and his incarnation from the Virgin Mary, and that she remained virgin after having given birth, so that it would be for the Christians a testimony of his coming to earth, his showing signs and miracles, such as his raising of the dead and his ascent to heaven (because there were prophecies about that from the prophets and clear signs from the apostles and testimonies from the world), as well as a

[72] Allusion to the change of the Qibla, mentioned in Q 2:142–145, which according to Muslim tradition occurred in the second of year after the Hijra. The original Qibla is not mentioned in the Qur'an but was probably Jerusalem (Wensinck and King, 'Ḳibla'); the author of the *Legend* exploits the lack of clarity on the original Qibla to suggest that it was the East before it became the sanctuary at Mecca.

[73] Determining the beginning and end of Ramadan in this way is not a Qur'anic injunction, but it is the most common method, based on a widely accepted ḥadīth. The strong intra-Muslim polemic against those who instead calculated the end of the fasting month probably formed the inspiration for the redactor (see Schacht, 'Hilāl').

[74] Q 3:45.

ومن العالم الشهادات وتكديب اليهود بمجيه الي الارض ودعواهم[1] ان[2] ليس هو المسيح .
وعلمت ان هدا[3] الغلام سيملك[4] ويكون له دوله منيعه[5] ⌜وسلطان عظيم وقوة كبيره ودكر منتشر في اقطار العالم[6] بما قد رايته[7] له من الروياء ⌜في طور[8] سينا *وبما قد[9] قراته من التوراة[10] ⌜وما دكره متاديوس[11] وما قراته في ⌜كتب اخر[12] سيكون له ملكا عظيم ودوله عظيمه كبيره وتنتشر[13] بنو[14] اسماعيل في الارض[15] ولا يقف بين يديهم[16] احدا من الملوك يقاتلهم[17] حتي تتم دولتهم وتنقضي مدتهم ويفني[18] سلطانهم[19] فتبت[20] له[21] مجي المسيح الحقيقي بلاهوته[22] وناسوته وتوحيد اسمه واعتراف النصاري له بالربوبيه[23] الدايمه ⌜وان الدي[24] ياتي[25] بعده[26] هو[27] المسيح الدجال[28] الدي يظل[29] من[30] يتبعه **ليكون ⌜شاهدا لنا وكتابه من بعده[31] ولليهود مكدبا وللمومنين ⌜بمجي المسيح[32] محتاجا[33] وحرصت[34] | ان اكشف له السر المكنون الدي كشفه[35] السيد[36] لم[37] يسع[38] 165b دلك[39] عقله[40] وتمكن[41] *في[42] فكره[43] امانة اريوس الملعون ⌜المارق الكافر[44] الدي قال اني[45] اومن *بان[46] المسيح[47] كلمة الله وابن الله ولكنه مخلوق ⌜لا حسي[48] محدودا ودهب عنه قول النبوات الصادقه والبينات الناطقه [49] والشهادات الواضحه والايات الظاهره [50] .

{16.4} تم ان الغلام رجع الي وقال لي ان[51] سالوني[52] عن الجنه فاي شئ اقول[53] لهم .
فقلت له تقول[54] لهم *انه[55] يعد[56] لكم جنة تجري من تحتها الانهار وتكونوا[57]

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[1] Y, الارض [6] Y ودرجة رفيعه + [5] X ملك عظيم + [4] X هدا الكلام من + [3] Y ه + [2] f X ودعوتهم
⌜ < X [7] f < VWY [8] ⌜ Y الطوراه W, الثورة V, التوريه [10] Y > [9] VW بطور ⌜ Y عدة [12] ⌜ < Y [11]
VW يقابلهم [17] VY ا + [16] i Y ساير الاقطار [15] VW ي f [14] VW وينتشر دكر [13] Y كتب [18] f ا
⌜ [24] V بالرنونيه [23] VW و i [22] VW, < Y لدلك [21] XY فبينت VW, فيتبت [20] X > * [19] VWY
VWX والدي [25] VW > VWXY يضل [29] VW ن f [28] Y ف + i [27] Y ي + f [26] VWY كلمن [30]
+ [36] Y لي + [35] Y جدا + [34] Y مصدقا [33] Y بالمسيح ⌜ [32] Y كتابه شاهدا لنا في ايامه وبعد موته ⌜ [31]
VWY المسيح [37] lege i و+ VW/ i + ف Y يقبله [38] Y > Y ولا سمعه + [40] Y, وابتر مما كامن +
J في لبه واستقر في عقله [41] VW وقارب عقله [42] Y من [43] * Y وفكره سوي [44] ⌜ VW ~ انني [45]
VW [46] i < VW بالمسيح انه * [47] Y [48] lege? ⌜ < Y, لانه جسد J [49] VWY القاطعه [50] ** < X [51] i
VWXY ن f [57] * < Y, VW م i [56] f < VW [55] i < VWXY [54] ه + f Y [53] Y سايلوني [52] ف + Y

disproof of the Jews regarding his coming to earth and their claim that he is not the Messiah.

And I knew that this young man would rule and that he would have an invincible dominion, mighty rule, great power and renown that would spread over the quarters of the earth, because of what I had seen about him in the vision on Mount Sinai and because of what I had read from the Torah and what Methodius had mentioned and what I had read in other books: 'He will have a great kingdom and a large mighty realm and the Sons of Ishmael will spread on the earth and none of the kings that fight them will withstand them, until their rule comes to an end, and their time finishes and their power vanishes'.[75]

And I confirmed for him the coming of the true Messiah, in his Divinity and his humanity, the oneness of his name, the profession by Christians of his eternal Lordship and the fact that the one who comes after him is the Antichrist, who leads those who follow him astray, so that he, and after him his book, would be a witness to us, while refuting the Jews and vindicating those who believe that the Messiah has come. And I strove | to reveal the well-kept mystery to him which the Lord 165b
has revealed. But his mind could not grasp that and the confession of the cursed Arius became firmly rooted in his mind, the unbelieving heretic who said 'I believe that Christ is the Word of God and the Son of God, but he is created, |because he is a| limited |body|'.[76] And the message of the truthful prophecies, the clear proofs, the manifest testimonies and the evident miracles escaped him.

{16.4} Then the youngster returned to me, saying: 'If they ask me about paradise, what shall I tell them?'

And I said to him: 'Say to them "He prepared a garden for you, from underneath which rivers flow, and you will be there forever.[77] Endless

[75] Cf. {6.5}, pp. 467–468.

[76] After 'created' the manuscripts give '*lā ḥissī*', imperceptible, which does not make sense in the context. J gives instead 'because he is a body', which is graphically similar (*makhlūq li'annahu jasad maḥdūd*) and probably correct. Y omits these words.

[77] * Q 9:89, Q 9:100.

خالدين فيها *ابدا[1] وفيها[2] فاكهة[3] موضوعه لا مقطوعه[4] وفيها[5] طير مما تشتهون من[6] جميع الخيرات[7] .

{16.5} فقال لي فان[8] سالوني[9] عن هده الانهار الدي[10] تجري من[11] الجنه ⸢اي شي[12] اقول لهم[13] .

فقلت له قول لهم[14] اربعة انهار تجري في الجنه نهر من ماء ونهر من خمر ونهر من عسل ونهر من لبن لده[15] للشاربين ⸢اعني ان[16] الاربعة انهار *الدي[17] تجري من[18] الجنه وتسقي العالم وهي[19] رسم ودلاله وتاويل[20] المسيح[21] بما قد سبقت به في[22] الكتب انه يجري من بطنه انهارا[23] تسقي العالم اي الاربعة اناجيل الدي اسقت العالم باسرهم[24] وهدتهم الي الطريق المستقيم[25] *لانني[26] رايت القوم لا يطلبون الا شهوة قلوبهم وفروجهم[27] فاعطيتهم[28] محبوبهم[29] انهم ياكلون فيها[30] ويشربون ويتنعمون .

{16.7} تم انه قال لي | ان[31] سالوني[32] هل في الجنه نساء نتمتع بهن[33] فاي شئ اقول لهم . 166a

فقلت[34] له قول لهم ان فيها حور العين[35] حسان يلتذهن[36] الرجال كل الايام ابكار كالاقمار ولم[37] يمسهن[38] انس ولا جان[39] طولها كدا وكدا[40] وعرضها كدا وكدا وما يستحيا من دكره[41] كدا وكدا وشرحت له صفة الجنه وطعامها وشرابها ونعيمها ولداتها[42] وحورياتها[43] ⸢وروضاتها وقصورها وغرفها وفرشها[44] ولباسها وحللها واصناف اشربتها[45] وانبدتها[46] .

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[1] < Y [2] i < VW [3] VW فواكه [4] + VW, ولا ممنوعه [5] Y ولا اول ممنوعه [6] i + VWY لحم [7] V و [8] i < VWXY سايلوني [9] VWY التي [10] VWY في [11] VWXY [12] ⸢ [13] < V Y ايش [14] f + ا X, + انه [15] Y اية [16] ⸢ عنيت بهدا علي VW, لانهم X, بدلك واني اعنيت [17] X التي [18] VW في [19] f م VWX [20] + عن X [21] i ل VW [22] lege < VWX انهار ما [23] Y الانجيليه متي ومرقص ولوقا ويوحنا التي هي كل المومنين * ,X + ه [24] f < VWX الحياه VWX [25] f + ف i + [26] VY لاني [27] + VW, وسمعتهم Y شهوتهم [28] i و Y فبلغتهم ارادتهم [29] Y [30] < Y [31] تلتد W, يلتد بهم V, يلتد بهن [32] VWY سايلوني ثم قالوا لي [33] f م Y [34] i < VW [35] < VWY وحوريها [36] W لديدها [37] i < VWY بهن [38] VW يشبهن لا [39] Y جن [40] < Y [41] f ا W [42] < VW, اسرتها [43] Y [44] ⸢ < Y وصنفت دلك جميعه حتي تقبله عقولهم ويبادروا الي طاعته J, * < X

quantities of fruit are to be found there[78] and the fowl you desire,[79] all kinds of good things".'

{16.5} And he said to me: 'And if they ask me about these rivers which flow from paradise, what shall I tell them?'

I said to him: 'Say to them: "Four rivers flow from paradise. One river of water, one river of wine, one river of honey and one of milk, a pleasure for those who drink".'[80] With this I mean that the four rivers that flow from paradise and give water to the whole world are a symbol and a sign, and the interpretation of Christ of what the scriptures had said before that from inside of him rivers would flow that would water the world,[81] that is to is to say: the four gospels that watered the whole world and guided it to the straight path, because I saw that the people did not seek anything but the lusts of their hearts and their pudenda. So I gave them what they liked: that they eat there and drink and have pleasure.[82]

{16.7} Then he said to me: | 'If they ask me: "are there women in 166a
paradise whom we can enjoy?" what shall I tell them?'

And I said to him: 'Say to them: "There are beautiful houris there, in whom men take pleasure every day, virgins like moons, who have not been touched by men or jinn,[83] whose length is so-and-so much and whose width is so-and-so much and that which one is ashamed to mention is so-and-so much".'[84] And I described paradise to him and its food, its drinks, its pleasures and delights, its houris, its gardens, its castles, its rooms, its beds, its clothes, its dresses, its types of beverages and its wines.[85]

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[78] * Q 56:33.

[79] * Q 52:22, Q 56:21.

[80] Cf. Q 47:15.

[81] Cf. John 7:38.

[82] See above, Ch. 4, pp. 121–128, for the monk's construction of the Muslim heaven, in the light of Muslim-Christian debate.

[83] Cf. Q 55:74.

[84] 'That which one is ashamed to mention' must allude to the private parts of the houris; Dionysius bar Ṣalībī, in his refutation of Islam, ridicules the same aspect of the Islamic heaven, but more explicitly: 'who proves [...] the intercourse with seventy women, who you claim are given to all of you, and the pudendum of each one of them of seventy miles long?' (Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 106 (t) [cf. vol. 2, p. 98 (tr) where it is unnecessarily emendated in order to let the phrase refer to the male genital organ]). The descriptions of the houris in ḥadīth are bulky and remarkably detailed and often include quantities and measurements of the number seven, or a multiplication of it (see el-Ṣaleḥ, *La vie future*, pp. 38–42).

[85] Cf. Q 39:20, Q 55:54, Q 55:68, Q 55:76, Q 22:23, Q 37:45, Q 47:15, Q 25:10.

{16.25} فقال قد عرفتني فاحسنت وفهمتني فاجملت وبشرتني فارشدت وقد[1] اشرت علي بديا[2] ان[3] اعلمهم ناموسا واضع لهم[4] شريعه[5] وقد[6] علمت[7] ما[8] وصفته[9] لي فما فهموه[10] ⌜فاختصر الان عليهم بما[11] تقبله[12] عقولهم *وتطمن[13] به[14] نفوسهم[15] ويكون[16] ⌜لهم دلك[17] دينا[18] يقينا يعتادوا[19] به ⌜ولا يشكل عليهم امره[20] ولا يحتاجون فيه الي فحص ولا الي بحث *ليلا[21] لم[22] يطيعوا ويرجعوا[23] الي[24] عبادة الاصنام *التي[25] قد[26] اعتادوا[27] بها .

⌜فقلت له ان كان القوم قد اعتادوا[28] واتخذوها[29] الهه[30] فقول[31] لهم[32] قول مختصر ان[33] الايمان الصحيح ان[34] يقولوا[35] لا اله ⌜الا الله[36] فتكونوا[37] مسلمين ان[38] الله قال لي قد رضيت الاسلام لكم دينا اعنيت[39] بدلك[40] ⌜اسم مسلم[41] المسيح[42] *⌜ليكون لهم اسم مع الاسم الاول الدي سميتهم[43] يتبت لهم الي[44] انقضاء[45] ملكهم .

{16.10} ⌜فقلت له[46] ⌜محرم[47] عليهم[48] الميته والدم ولحم[49] الخنزير | {16.13} 166b
*ويصير[50] لهم عيدا[51] من الجمعه[52] الي الجمعه[53] لتكون[54] لهم شريعه معروفه وادا كان يوم الجمعه[55] فامرهم ان يجتمعوا[56] اليك في[57] المسجد من كل موضع وتصلي بهم وتوصيهم[58] ان[59] لا يتعدوا علي احدا *ويتعاونوا[60] ويفرحوا[61] متل[62] النصاري في بيعهم[63] يوم الاحد ويعظمونه[64] لانه[65] يوم جليل يوم خلاص العالم **ووقت صبغة[66] ادم مع صلاة *الظهر وتكون صلاتهم[67] الجمعه[68] الظهر .

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[1] i ف VW [2] < X, اولا Y [3] i + ب Y [4] f ا W [5] شرعا Y [6] i ف VWY [7] علمتهم جميع Y [8] + Y [15] * فيه Y [14] وتطيب VW [13] ي i Y [12] فتنعم علي شيا مختصر ⌜ X [11] f ا X [10] اوصفت Y [9] قد X < [16] i < W [17] ⌜ ~ XY [18] < VW Y [19] يقتادوا X, f ن Y [20] < Y, ⌜ < X [21] + ان VW [22] ما Y, * ولا X [23] يرجعون VW, ولا يرجعوا Y [24] + قولي واخشاء ان يعودوا الي VWX الدى [25] [26] < X [27] * كما معتادين Y [28] اعتادوها VW, ⌜ < XY [29] + لهم Y [30] + قال VW, قلت له ثم انه [31] i < VW, فقلت X [32] f < X [33] < W [34] انهم Y [35] lege i ت X [36] + الله رسول محمد X, [37] فيكونوا Y [38] i + ف VW [39] i < VWX, واني اعنيت Y [40] + ان VW [41] + هو ⌜ الاله VW [43] ⌜ < Y [44] * سيده Y [42] الاسلام هو اسلام ⌜ VW, الدي اسلم عن شعبه وهو الاسم التابث الدي X [47] ي VW, i ت Y ثم اني قلت له ايضا انك VW, وقلت لهم ايضا ⌜ VW [46] انقضى VW [45] يكون به VW ويحرسوا مع دلك ان يكون لهم * XY [51] وتصير X لهم تحرموا لحم ⌜ VW [49] عليكم ايضا Y [48] X يستجمعوا W, ن f W [56] جمعا V, جمعه VWXY [55] ليكون VW [54] متل عيد يعيدوه + Y [53] جمعه Y [52] Y ويكونوا فرحين * X < VW, ويتصاوتوا Y [60] انهم Y [59] ثم وصيهم VW, تم توصيهم Y [58] الي Y [57] بيوم + Y [67] صنعه VW [66] ف i VWX [65] ويعظموه VWXY [64] كنايسهم VW [63] كما تفرح Y [62] [68] * < VW (hom)

{16.25} And he said to me: 'You have taught me and done it well, you have made me understand and summarized it all, you have given me good tidings and shown the right way. However, you have advised me initially to teach them a Law and impose on them a *Sharīʿa*, and I have taught what you have described to me, but they did not understand. So condense it for them now according to that which their minds can grasp and appeases their souls.[86] Let it be an indisputable religion for them, to which they can get accustomed, that will not be difficult for them, and for which they will not need to investigate and study, lest they disobey and return to the idol worship to which they were accustomed'.

And I said to him: 'If the people were used to take them as gods, then give them a concise expression: "The true faith is that you say 'there is no god but God' and you will be Muslims. God said to me '*I have approved Islam as your religion*' "'.[87] I meant with this the name 'Muslim of Christ' in order that they have a name that will be fixed for them until the end of their rule, together with the first name that I gave them.[88]

{16.10} And I said to him: 'Forbidden for you are: carrion, blood and pork.[89] | {16.13} Let there be a holiday for them on every Friday, 166b
in order that they have a well-known law, and when it is Friday, order them to gather with you in the mosque from everywhere. You will lead them in prayer and you will command them not to be hostile toward anyone and to help one another and to celebrate like Christians in their church on Sunday. They glorify it because it is a venerable day, the day of the redemption of the world. The time of Adam's baptism was the prayer of noon, so their prayer on Friday should be at noon.'[90]

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[86] See above, p. 453, n. 29, for the idea that the monk was 'condensing' his faith for the Arabs.

[87] Q 5:3.

[88] For the Christianizing interpretations of the term *islām* and *muslim* in the Qur'an, see above: Ch. 5, pp. 145–147. It is unclear to what this 'first name' refers; no other name is mentioned above.

[89] Q 2:173, Q 5:3, Q 16:115.

[90] Friday, lit. 'day of congregation', historically became the day of worship in Islam because it was the day on which people used to gathering in Medina for the market, a custom probably originating with the Jewish communities who used that day to prepare for the Sabbath. See: Goitein, 'Muslim Friday Worship'. For Ibn Saʿd (*Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3, part 1, p. 53) this historical explanation sufficed, but later Muslim scholars traced it to sacred history, viz. the creation of Adam on Friday and his pristine custom of praying at noon. See Schöck, *Adam in Islam*, pp. 63–65. The redactor of A2 gives a Christian different twist to this and asserts that Adam was baptized at noon.

تم[1] قال لي انك قلت لي ان صلاة النصاري طويله وقومي فليس[2] يطيقون التطويل .
فقلت له ⌜ان تفرض[3] عليهم تلاتة[4] ركعات في كل صلاه متلما[5] تصلي[6] النصاري[7] اول دخولهم[8] البيعه *فانه يصلي واحده لنفسه قبل ان يقف خلف الامام[9] فتصير[10] انت اصحابك[11] يصلوا[12] خلفك في جماعه فادا صلا[13] واحدا من امتك وحده فلا يزيد ولا ينقص علي صلاة الجماعه[14] .
{16.14} تم[15] رجع[16] الي[17] وهو مهموم[18] وقال[19] لي ان قومي قالوا[20] نريد ان تبين لنا[21] وتصحح[22] ان كنت نبيا *وان كان[23] كلامك[24] حق حتي نومن انك ارسلت الينا بالنبوه لتحيدنا عن عبادة الهتنا .
فقلت له[25] تقول[26] لهم ان الله يرسل الي[27] كتابا من السماء وقد وعدني[28] به الي اسبوع ياتيني به[29] رسولا لا[30] يتكلم يبشرني كما بشر نوح في السفينه مع رسول[31] لا[32] يتكلم بانصراف الماء[33] عن وجه الارض كدلك ياتيكم الهدا[34] | بانصراف الضلاله[35] عن قلوبكم وتبات[36] الايمان في صدوركم 167a بالوصايا والاخبار والقصص[37] ويشهد[38] بالنبوه والرساله .
{16.26} وكتبت[39] له ايضا محمد رسول الله ارسله[40] بالهدي ودين الحق ليظهره علي ⌜الدين كله[41] *ولو[42] كره المشركين[43] .

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[1] + انه Y [2] i < VWY النصراني[7] VW f ي[6] VWY او متل ما[5] W ثلث f < VY, [4] Y اعرض ⌜[3] Y الي + VW, دخوله الى[8] VW في الايام[9] W فيصير[10] VW و + i W [11] f ن VW [12] < [13] VW ** < X, * فانهم يضربون ثلاث مطانيات ثم اقف انت وهم يقفوا خلفك يصلون وهي تكون [14] Y انه + [15] Y صلاه واحده ان كانوا جماعة او واحد فهي تكون صلاه مفروظ بلا نقص ولا زيادة غاب[16] Y لي + [20] Y ثم قال X, ف i [19] Y معبس الوجه + [18] Y دفعة اخري + [17] X عني ورجع [21] < W Y ثم تبرهن + W, لنا وتبين نبوتك لنا وتصح + V, وتبين نبوتك لنا وتصح + [22] وانت * [24] < VW [23] X لا تحزن بل + VW مع + [29] VW f م [30] X ان + [31] X ا + i VW [28] i < VWXY [27] X ما الطوفان [33] Y م i [32] V X وتشهد [38] < Y [37] X ى f [34] Y الظلاله [35] V وتبيت VW, وتبت [36] Y قبله وبعده * [43] VW ه f [42] Y كل الدين ⌜ [41] W, f < X, < Y ت V, f ارسلته [40] VW تم كتبت [39]

Then he said to me: 'You told me that the prayer of the Christians is long, but my people cannot stand things which take long.'

So I said to him: 'Impose three Rak'a's on them with every prayer in the way Christians pray when they enter the church. If someone prays by himself, before standing behind the Imam, then you should make your companions pray behind him in a group. And if someone from your community prays by himself, then he should pray neither more nor less than the communal prayer.'

{16.14} Then he returned to me worried, saying: 'My people have said "We want you to prove and substantiate for us that you are a prophet and that your words are true, in order to believe that you have been sent to us with a prophetic mission to make us relinquish the worship of our gods".'

And I said to him: 'Say to them "God will send me a book from heaven and he has promised it to me in a week. It will be brought to me by a messenger who does not speak, who brings me good tidings, just as He brought Noah in the boat good tidings with a messenger who does not speak, through the withdrawal of the water from the face of the earth.[91] Likewise guidance will reach you | through the withdrawal of 167a
the error from your hearts and the establishment of faith in your breasts by means of commandments, histories and tales, and it will testify to prophethood and apostleship".'[92]

{16.26} And I wrote for him too: '*Muḥammad is the apostle of God. He sent him with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it triumph over the whole of religion, though the polytheists be averse.*'[93]

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[91] Because of the reference to the story of Noah, 'a messenger who does not speak' is probably a reference to the dove with the 'newly plucked olive leaf' that showed Noah that the flood had withdrawn (Gen. 8:8–12), similar to the cow that brings the Qur'an to Muḥammad, also called 'a messenger who does not speak'. See also below: p. 495 ({16.14}, and n. 112) and the next footnote.

[92] The Qur'an draws numerous parallels between Noah and Muḥammad. Noah was also sent as a 'clear warner' (Q 26:115; Q 71:2), who admonished his people to relinquish their idols and to turn to the One God (Q 71:3). His people challenged him to show a sign that his message was true (Q 11:32), and he did this by building the Ark by which only righteous ones were saved. This recension of the *Legend* builds forth on this typology, adopting the notion that Noah was a *rasūl* (as he himself is saying Q 7:61), even though he did not bring a Scripture, to show that if Muhammad is called *rasūl* it does not mean that he brought a revealed message. The comparison fits with the general tendency of the *Legend* to depict Muḥammad's message as lacking originality and only serving to counteracting polytheism.

[93] For this triumphant slogan that combines Q 48:29, Q 9:33 and Q 61:9 (cf. Q 48:28), see above: Ch. 5, p. 135.

وكتبت له ايضا ما[1] محمد الا رسول قد خلت من قبله الرسل[2] .
وايضا انك رسول الله والله يشهد انك رسوله[3] ان[4] الله وملايكته يصلون علي النبي يا ايها الدين امنوا صلوا عليه وسلموا تسليما .
وايضا ما فرطنا[5] في الكتاب[6] من شئ .
واشيا كتيره عظيمه كتبتها له واحكمتها[7] له[8] واني[9] اعلم انها ستتغير[10] وتنقص وتزداد مرار كتيره **لان ⌜من بعده[11] يستتبعه[12] قوما[13] ويتموا[14] لنا اعدا *واحبا[15] وغير دلك[16] ويستحسن[17] كل واحد منهم ⌜ما احب[18] ومن بعده ⌜يغيرون اكتر ما كتبت له[19] ويقوم قوم من اصحابه ويقاتلون[20] علي الملك والدوله ويقتل منهم خلق[21] كتير[22] ويقع[23] بينهم[24] الخلف والعداوه بعد موته ويكونون[25] علي وجل[26] ومخافه ⌜من البدايه[27] الي انقضي[28] دولتهم ويفني[29] ملكهم ولم[30] تزال[31] بينهم[32] العداوه[33] والبغض[34] والدكر القبيح *ويري[35] بعضهم قتل بعض قربانا[36] ⌜الي الله[37] ولا يفنون الا بالسيف .
تم[38] جاني[39] وقال لي قد[40] فعلت[41] ما امرتني به واشرت[42] ورضوا[43] بما اوعدتهم به[44] .

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[1] i + و Y [2] < X [3] وكتبت له ايضا + Y [4] i + و VW [5] فرضنا Y [6] كتابنا VWX [7] احكتها Y
[8] <VWXY [9] وانني VW [10] تغير VW, ستغير X, سبعين Y [11] ⌜ < VW, الا اني علمت انه Y
[12] سيتبعه VW, lege سيتبعته Y [13] قوم كتير VW [14] وينموا W, ويصيروا Y [15] lege? واحيا, واحنا W
[16] ما كتبت ⌜ < VW يعلمه ويقوله Y, ⌜ [18] تم يستحسن VW [17] ويعلموا ما يقوم في نفوسهم Y
[20] ه f VW [21] خلايق VWX [22] <
[24] فيهم VWXY [23] ثم تقع Y [25] وتكون W [26] د i VW ما كتبت به ويغيرون اكتروا به W, ** < X
[27] المقابله VW, المقاتله X, ⌜
[28] يوم VW, f ا X [29] وفنا VWXY [30] f ا VWY [31] ي i يزل VW, [32] الخلف + V, منهم
[33] و + i VW [34] ه + f XY [35] f ا Y [36] يقدمه + Y [37] ⌜ لله VWY, * ويقتلوا بعضهم
[38] انه + Y [39] جا الى VW [40] ف + i VW [41] قلت V, قلت لي [42] عليهم + W [43] وقد X البعض
[44] < XY رضوا Y

And I wrote for him: '*Muḥammad is no more than an apostle. Apostles have passed away before him.*'[94]

Also: 'You are the apostle of God.'[95]

And: 'God bears witness that you are His apostle.'[96]

And: '*God and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, bless him and salute him.*'[97]

And also: '*We have omitted nothing from the book.*'[98]

Numerous important things I wrote and devised for him, although I know that they will be changed and subtracted from and added to many times, because after him people will follow him who will become inimical and [hateful] to us and so on. Every one of them will deem appropriate whatever he likes, and after him they will change most of what I have written for him. A group of his followers will rise up and fight about the rule and the power and many of them will be killed. And there will be discord and enmity amongst them after his death. And they will be full of dread and fright from the beginning until the end of their rule. Their rule will vanish, but the enmity, hatred and slander amongst them will not stop. They will regard the killing of one another as a sacrifice to God.[99] And they will not perish except by the sword.

Then he came to me and said: 'I have done as you have commanded me and advised me to do, and they consented to what I promised them.'

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[94] Q 3:144.

[95] Not a literal quotation from the Qur'an.

[96] Not a literal quotation from the Qur'an.

[97] Q 33:56; this verse is frequently used in Christian apologetic texts to prove that it is not absurd to claim that Christ prayed. The word translated as 'bless' (*yuṣallūna*) is the same as 'to pray' in Arabic, so the verse could be taken as 'God and His angels pray for the Prophet etc'. See for example Dionysius bar Ṣalībī's argumentation in Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 72 (t), vol. 2, pp. 64–65 (tr); further examples in my 'A Christian reading of the Qur'an', pp. 62–63.

[98] Q 6:38.

[99] Cf. John 16:2: 'the hour will come when whoever kills you will consider it as making a sacrifice (*qurbān*) to God'. This verse features here and in other Christian Arabic writings as a prediction of the fate of Christians under Islam and is used as a negative counterbalance to what Muslim considered to be predictions of Muḥammad in the Bible. The verse is used to condemn the Muslim view of martyrdom, for which the word *qurbān* was sometimes used (see Wensinck, 'Ḳurbān'), the very word which Christians used for the Eucharist. See for example: Mingana, 'The Apocalypse of Peter', p. 322 (t) p. 253 (tr), Jeffery, 'Ghevond's text', p. 321 (tr).

167b {16.27} فقلت له | قد كتبت لك كتابا محكما فيه[1] ⸢جميع ما[2] تحتاج اليه من مسايل واخبار[3] وقصص الانبياء والصديقين وحديث الشهدا والصالحين ومواعظ حسنه وشهادات بينه[4] تتبت[5] لك ***النبوه[6] والرساله[7] **وما[8] امرك[9] *الدي[10] ارسلك بالنبوه والهدي[11] ودين الحق *وله[12] ما فرطت[13] في الكتاب من شئ[14] .

وكتبت له ايضا انا اعطيناك الكوتر فصلي لربك وانحر ان[15] شانك[16] هو الابتر[17] اعني[18] بدلك تتليت الاقانيم وتوحيد الربوبيه ودبح حمل الفصح النقي بلا عيب .

*⸢وكتبت ايضا[19] ما[20] خلقت الانس[21] والجان الا ليعبدوني اعنيت[22] بدلك الوحدانيه للاله[23] الخالق[24] الحي الناطق[25] .

وكتبت له ايضا لا[26] تجادلوا اهل الكتاب الا بالتي هي[27] احسن[28] اردت بدلك ان[29] لا يخاطبوا اهل الانجيل الا *بخطاب[30] جميل[31] *ولا يتهموا[32] بالكدب[33] بل يصدقوا[34] .

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[1] f < VW [2] ⸢ كلما VW [3] < X متبته [4] VWXY [5] تشهد VWX [6] i + ب X [7] مع الرساله Y [8] وكما
[9] *** < VW [10] i + ب VW [11] * به كدلك افعل فقد تضمن الكتاب انه قد شهد لك بالنبوه والرساله
[12] وانه VW, lege واني X [13] + لك X [14] * وانه لم يعجز شيا Y
[15] i + و W, < X
[16] lege شانيك V [17] الاكبر W [18] f + ت Y [19] له Y, ⸢ وايضا كتبت له VW [20] + قد VW, i + و Y
[21] الانسان Y [22] i < VW [23] الدي لاله VW, i ا Y [24] الحق VW [25] + الدي خلق كل الخلايق ليعبدونه
[26] i + و VWY [27] < X, f و Y [28] i ي X [29] < X بكل خطابا [30] Y بالخطاب * [31]
[32] VW تتهموهم [33] VWX بكدب [34] + VW, وكتبت له ايضا الله نور السموات والارض
Y ثم يجلوا قدرهم ولا يكدبوا قولهم وكتبت له ايضا الله نور السماوات والارض* VW الجميل

{16.27} And I said to him: | 'I have written a masterly book for 167b
you, which contains all of the matters you need, as well as the histories and the stories of the prophets and the righteous,[100] the tales of the martyrs, the virtuous and excellent exhortations[101] and clear testimonies that prove prophethood and apostleship for you, and what he who sent you with prophethood and guidance and the religion of truth ordered you, and I did not omit anything from the book'.[102]

And I wrote for him also: '*We have given you al-Kawthar, so pray to your Lord and sacrifice. Your hater is the one cut off*'.[103] With this I mean the threeness of the hypostases and the oneness of Lordship and the slaughtering of the pure Pascal lamb, without blemish.[104]

And I also wrote for him: '*I have not created mankind and the jinn except to worship Me*'.[105] With this I meant the oneness of God, the Creator, the Living, the Rational.

And I also wrote for him: '*Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in the best way*'.[106] With this I meant that the people of the Gospel should only be addressed with nice speech and that they should not be suspected of falsehood, but rather be given credence.

And I also wrote for him: '*You desire to extinguish the light of God*'.[107] With this I mean that He is a living rational and creative light.

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[100] Cf. Q 4:69.

[101] Cf. Q 16:125.

[102] Cf. Q 6:38.

[103] Q 108. Muslim exegetes read the word al-Kawthar as 'abundance'/'abundant goodness' or as the name of a river in paradise (Horovitz and Gardet, 'Kawthar'). It is unclear how the redactor of the *Legend* interprets this word; the most important point of this quotation is the alleged connection between the Qur'anic command to 'sacrifice' ('*inḥar*') and the self-sacrifice of Christ.

[104] Cf. 1 Pet 1:19.

[105] Q 51:56; after having established the reality of the Trinity as expressed in the Qur'anic verses in which God speaks of Himself in a plural form, this verse is presented as a proof of the divine oneness. The verse played a role in discussions of free will and predestination among Muslims and may have become known to the Christian *mutakallimūn* through those debates; see above Ch. 5, p. 136.

[106] Q 29:46.

[107] Q 9:32, Q 61:8; this verse is to be found first in the context of Jews and Christians believing in others besides God, and then in a passage about the unbelievers' rejection of the prophets. In both instances it is those failing to recognize the revelation of Islam, who are trying to extinguish God's light. Christians, however, read the Qur'anic term 'light of God' as a reference to Christ and that is how Abraham of Tiberias can use this Qur'anic phrase to claim that it is Muslims who try to extinguish it by denying Christ's divinity. See: Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade*, pp. 364–365 (ttr).

وكتبت له ايضا تريدون[1] ان[2] تطفوا[3] نور الله اعني[4] بدلك انه نور حي ناطق خالق .
وكتبت له ايضا يا مريم ان الله اصفاك[5] وطهرك[6] علي نسا العالمين *اردت بدلك ⌜التاكيد في تبجيل[7] الطاهره البتول ام النور .
{16.28} تم جاني وقال لي قد قامت علي الجماعه[8] والقبيله[9] الفلانيه وهي خشنه صلبه[10] جاهليه[11] شديدة الباس وهي تتصلف[12] علي وتتجبر وتتكبر
وتانف | من امري وتهيننني[13] ولا تقبل مني وتقول[14] انها في العرب اخير مني 168a
وانا[15] اخير منهم ابا واما وليس[16] اطيقهم ولا اقدر عليهم لانهم غليظي[17] الطبع متظافرين متساعدين متسابقين[18] ولا[19] اطيق مناظرتهم[20] ولا شرهم[21] ولا مقاومتهم .
فقلت له لا تحزن انا اكفيك[22] هده القضيه[23] وكتبت[24] له ⌜في الكتاب[25] يا ايها الناس انا جعلناكم شعوبا[26] وقبايلا[27] لتتعارفوا[28] ان اكرمكم عند الله اتقاكم .
وكتبت[29] له ايضا قالت[30] الاعراب امنا[31] فقل[32] لم تومنوا ولم يدخل[33] الايمان في[34] قلوبكم[35] قولوا اسلمنا اعنيت[36] بدلك ان الايمان[37] الصحيح هو الايمان بالمسيح والاسلام[38] اسلام[39] تلميده[40] المسيح[41] .
وامتال هدا[42] كله كتبت[43] له[44] *وحملت ⌜عنه المونه[45] والتعب[46] فيه[47] .

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[1] i ي Y [2] < Y [3] f ن VWXY [4] f + ت Y [5] اصطفاكي ,VWX اصطفاك Y [6] f + ي Y [7] ⌜ التبجيل
[8] < VWY [9] i < VWY [10] صعبه Y [11] lege جاهله Y [12] i < VW وتنهي ,VW وتهيني [13]
في VW [14] غلاظ Y [15] ف i VW [16] ولكني ما Y [17] ولا تدخل فتحت طاعتي لانها تتكبر علي وتزعم Y
ثم اني [18] * < X [19] ليس Y [20] مناظراتهم Y [21] + ولا كيدهم Y [22] + فيهم VW [23] يتسابقون Y
و W [24] + i [25] < X ⌜ كتبت Y [26] < VW [27] i < W [28] لتعرفون ,X لتعرفوا Y [29] ثم كتبت Y [30]
وان [31] X انها ,X ت i [32] فقلت لهم Y [33] i < Y [34] < Y [35] قلوبهم X [36] i < VWX [37] الان V
الاسلام VW [38] + تلاميده V (but erased), ان ما اسلم Y [39] تلامذه ?lege J [40] له Y القبيح ,VWX [41]
ه f [42] Y [43] i + و Y [44] + به وكملت عنه دلك VW [45] المونه Y, ⌜ < VW [46] i < VW [47] * < X

And I also wrote for him: '*O Mary, God has chosen you and purified you and He has chosen you above all the women of the world*.'[108] With this I meant the affirmation of the veneration of the chaste Virgin, mother of the Light.

{16.28} Then he came to me and said to me: 'A certain crowd and tribe have turned against me. They are rough, obstinate, ignorant and aggressive. They act arrogantly to me and they are haughty and proud. They disdain | my mission and humiliate me. They do not accept my 168a
words, and say that there are better Arabs than me, while I am better than they are, both with respect to my mother and my father. I cannot stand up to them, because they have such a rude nature; they stick together and help each other and vie with one another. I am not strong enough to dispute with them and to deal with their mischief and their opposition.'

And I said to him: 'Do not be sad. I will protect you from this problem'. And I wrote for him in the book: '*O people, We have made you into peoples and tribes in order that you know that the noblest of you with God is the most pious of you*.'[109]

And I also wrote for him: '*The Bedouins say "we believe". Say: "you do not believe. The faith has not entered your hearts. Say "we have become Muslims".*"'[110] With that I mean that the true faith is the belief in Christ, and Islam is the submission of Christ's disciple[s].[111] All of these maxims I wrote for him and I took the burden and the hardship off his shoulders.

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[108] Q 3:42.

[109] Q 49:13; this verse became a propaganda phrase in the ninth century for Persian Muslims who fought for equal status to Arab Muslims. To them it meant that God does not mind whether one is Arab or not, because piety counts in the eyes of God before anything else. The clue to the Christian use of the verse is similar, namely that God does not demand everyone to become Muslim, as long as one is pious. See for example: Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, p. 67* (t), p. 175 (tr). See also above Ch. 5, pp. 135–136, p. 148.

[110] Q 49:14 (different word order).

[111] Above in {16.25} Islam is referred to as a condensed form of the faith: 'God said to me: '*I have approved Islam as your religion*' (Q 5:3)'. I meant with this the name 'Muslim of Christ'". Similarly here Islam is called 'the submission (*islām*) of Christ's disciples' (reading 'disciples' in plural as in J). Both phrases echo Q 3:52: 'The disciples said: "We are God's helpers. We believe in God and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims".' Although in this passage in question, in the context of Muhammad's complaint about his uncouth rivals, it is suggested that Islam is inferior to 'belief' (*īmān*), the other passage is meant to demonstrate that Islam is not contrary to Christ, since the disciples were amongst those who were Muslim (lit. 'who have submitted'). The question of the difference between 'belief' and 'Islam' in the Qur'an is notoriously difficult and the Christian apologists exploited the inconsistency in different ways. See the more detailed discussion above in Ch. 5, pp. 146–148.

{16.14} تم[1] قال لي[2] متي ترسل الي[3] الكتاب .
فقلت[4] ليس اقدر ارسله مع انسان ليلا يتهم[5] وقد بينت[6] لك[7] اولا[8] انه[9]
يرسل[10] مع رسولا لا يتكلم وانا[11] ادع الكتاب علي قرن بقره الايمن[12]
واخليها تمر[13] بين البقر *وادا[14] هي راحت[15] اليكم[16] تكونوا[17] كلكم جالسين[18]
مجتمعين[19] علي حديت *لتنظروا[20] اليها فادا[21] اقبلت وسط[22] البقر[23] فادا
رايتها[24] قد اقبلت *بينهم ⸢من بعد[25] فانهض[26] وقم[27] علي قدميك وتلقاها[28]
بروعه[29] وخشيه[30] وهم ينظرون اليك وخد الكتاب ⸢من علي[31] قرنها[32] وقبله
واجعله علي عينيك | وامسح[33] به وجهك ⸢بين ايديهم[34] وقول لهم الحمد 168b
لله الدي[35] *اهدانا ⸢وما كنا مهتديين[36] وقد[37] كتبت له[38] في[39] اوله[40] يسبح
الله[41] ما في السموات[42] ⸢وما في الارض[43] الملك القدوس العزيز الحكيم الدي
هو بعتني بالامس رسولا منهم[44] يتلوا[45] عليهم[46] اياته ويعلمهم[47] الكتاب
والحكمه *وان كانوا من قبل[48] في[49] ⸢ظلال مبين[50] فادا[51] قبضت الكتاب[52]
قول[53] لهم[54] ⸢هو دا[55] قد بعت[56] ⸢اليكم هدا الكتاب[57] العزيز من السماء
وحتي[58] لم يكن[59] يستوجب[60] حمله ولا قبوله احدا[61] من الناس قبلته[62] هده
البقره[63] السليمه الطاهره *بلا دنب[64] النقيه[65] ⸢بلا عيب[66] ⸢كما وعدني قوله
الحق[67] اني[68] ابعته[69] مع رسولا لا[70] يتكلم .

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[1] + انه Y [2] < Y [3] i < VW [4] + له VWXY [5] + بسبب VW, يتوهم وينسب الي X,
[6] + تبين Y [7] + دلك VWY, لهم دلك X [8] بديا VW, علي X [9] + و VW [10] + لك VW,
غرض Y [11] i < VW, ولكن انا X [12] الايمان Y [13] تمشي Y [14] + ف i Y [15] اقبلت VWY [16] * <
+ اليك Y [17] f ن W, وتكنوا X, وانتم Y [18] جلوس Y [19] < XY [20] لينظروا VW, النظر X [21] i < VW, و
Y وقوم [27] Y فانهط [26] i < VWX, * < Y [25] ⸢ < VWX, انطرتها [24] Y [23] * < Y وصط [22] X
X, [34] i < X ومسح [33] Y قرونها [32] VW عن ⸢ X, [31] < VW وفزع + [30] Y برعه [29] Y ثم تلقاها [28]
ارسل *, Y والهمنا طاعته ⸢ [36] Y ارسل الينا الهدي ليهتدي والحمد لله الدي + [35] Y وجميعهم ينظروك ⸢
[38] < VW وانني [37] Y ارسل الينا الهدي VW, الينا الهدي لنهتدي والحمد لله الدي هدانا وملكنا نهتدي
عليكم [46] Y ا i [45] Y < f [44] X والارض ⸢ [43] Y السماء [42] i < VWX [41] X اول الكتاب [40] X < [39]
V, i + ف i + [53] X < * [52] VWY و i [51] Y الظلال المبين ⸢ [50] V بقى [49] W قتل [48] Y وعلم [47] Y
+ [59] Y وحيث X, انهم + [58] X (231) ~ ⸢ [57] Y الله + [56] X < ⸢ [55] VW < [54] X ويقول W, ت
X القراه [63] Y ف i + VW, حملته [62] X < VWX [61] X يستحبوا ولا يستوجبوا [60] Y من + VW, احد
ارسله [69] VW انني [68] Y وقوله الحق كما اوعدني ⸢ [67] Y < ⸢ [66] Y (312) ~ X, * < [65] VX س f [64]
VW [70] i م Y

{16.14} Then he said to me: 'When will you send me the book?'

I told him: 'I cannot send it with a human being, for fear that it will be suspect. I have explained to you earlier that it will be sent with a messenger who does not speak.[112] I will put the book on the right horn of a cow and I will let her walk between the cows. When she comes towards you, you should all be sitting together talking, so that they see her. And when she comes close, amid the cows, and you see her approaching among them from a distance, then get up on your feet and meet her with awe and apprehension, while they are looking at you. Take the book from her horn, kiss it, place it on your eyes, | and 168b rub your face with it in their presence. And say to them: "*Praise be to God, who has guided us, who were not guided before*".'[113]

And I had already written for him in the beginning: '*That which is in the heavens and that which is on earth praise God, the King, the Holy, the Mighty, the Wise, who sent [to the unlettered people] a messenger from amongst them, who recites His signs to them and [who purifies them and] who teaches them the book and the wisdom, even though they were in obvious error before*'.[114] 'And when you have taken the book, say to them: "See, He has sent this mighty book to you from heaven and since no one from the people is worthy of carrying it and receiving it, this faultless, pure, innocent, immaculate, flawless cow has received it, in accordance with His true words 'I will send it with a prophet who does not speak'."'[115]

[112] See above, p. 487, where the 'messenger who does not speak' seems to allude to Noah's dove, comparable to the appearance of the cow to Muḥammad. The innuendo of this passage is that 'a messenger who does not speak', i.e. the cow, cannot reveal who the real author of the Qur'an is.

[113] Cf. Q 7:43; because of the Noah typology in the above, this is probably an allusion to the exclamation of those safe in the Ark: 'praise be to God, who has delivered us from the people of the evildoers' (Q 23:28).

[114] Q 62:1–2; emendated on the basis of the real Qur'anic verse; the manuscripts contain a clear instance of confusion over the diacritical punctuation: *bi l-ams* read *fī l-ummiyyīn*.

[115] It is worth noting that since Arabic does not have capital letters, in a passage like this there is always a suitable ambiguity when 'he', 'him' and 'his' are mentioned, since the writing does not reveal whether these words refer to God or to the monk.

{16.15} وفعل[1] الغلام كلما[2] امرته[3] به وسما[4] هدا الكتاب فرقانا[5] لانه كان مفرقا[6] فاجتمع[7] من كتب كتير[8] .

{17} **تم بدا[9] بحيره[10] فقال[11] ستكون[12] شدايد عظيمه[13] *وجزع عظيم[14] ودما كتير تسفك[15] في بلد[16] بلد[17] {17.3} لان الله يحول وجهه عن الارض كلها في سنة الف وخمسين من سني[18] الاسكندر[19] *وتقتل[20] العرب[21] ملكهم وتكون مقتله عظيمه بينهم سابوع[22] واحد {17.4} وفيه يبطل[23] ملك الاتناعشر[24] ملكا اولايك الدين[25] قال الله ⌜عز وجل[26] لابراهيم ان
169a اتناعسر[27] | كبير[28] تخرج[29] من ظهره .
{17.7} وبعد[30] دلك تملك عصاة[31] بنو هاشم القوي {17.13} وبه[32] يودب الله جميع الناس والبهايم والوحوش *ويخربون الارض ويملكوها[33] والاشجار[34] والمياه ⌜وكل شي[35] يتحرك منه[36] عند[37] دلك تفتخر[38] بنو[39] هاشم {17.14} ويربون[40] ⌜شعور روسهم[41] متل النساء {17.16} ولا يشنعهم[42] ⌜ويكون في ايامهم جوع[43] وموت[44] وقتل[45] وسفك دما[46] كتيره[47] {17.24} وفي[48] دلك

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[1] i ف Y [2] كما Y [3] امره VWY [4] f ي VW [5] قرانا) قرانا im) X [6] مقرونا Y [7] i و Y [8] f + ه كتيره[13] WY سيكون[12] Y وقال انه ,VW و i[11] Y بحيريا الراهب[10] VWY تنبا lege[9] VWXY
[14] VW كتير VW [15] * < Y [16] VW كل [17] ** X omits these words and inserts the passage Y لان العرب يقتلوا *[21] i < X[20] VW تكتر الشدايد +[19] XY ن + f[18] {18.41}—{18.66}
[22] Y اسبوعا [23] VW يكون ابطال [24] VWXY الاتنى عشر [25] f < VWX [26] ⌝ crossed out Y
[27] VWXY اتني عشر [28] < X, كنز Y [29] i ي VW [30] X وعند [31] VX عصاته [32] Y الدي به [33] lege
[34] * < Y [35] ⌝ Y وكلما [36] < VW, Y في البحر [37] i + ف Y [38] i ي VW [39] f + ا ويهلكونها VWX
X [40] i < V [41] VW, ⌝ رووسهم [42] X شعورهم lege?[42] VWY, يشنهم دلك يشبعهم [43] VW, ⌝ جزع
[47] < Y [48] i < X الدماء[46] Y والقتل[45] Y ويكثر الموت ايضا[44] Y بل يكون الجوع في امامهم

{16.15} The boy did everything as I had ordered him and he called this book Furqān, because it was made up of different pieces and it was assembled from many books.'[116]

{17} Then Baḥīrā prophesied and said: 'there will be great distress and great fear, and much blood will be shed in every place,[117] {17.3} because God will turn away his face from the whole earth in the year 1050 of the years of Alexander. And the Arabs will kill their king and there will be great slaughter amongst them for one great week, {17.4} during which will end the rule of the twelve kings, the ones of whom God said to Abraham that twelve | great kings will come forth from his loin. 169a

{17.7} After that the powerful rod of the Sons of Hāshim will rule, {17.13} and with it God will chastise all the people and the cattle and the beasts. They will lay waste the earth and [destroy] it, and the trees and the streams and everything else will be set in motion by it. Then the Sons of Hāshim will glorify themselves {17.14} and they will let the hair of their heads grow like women, {17.16} and it will not [satisfy] them. {17.20} And in their days there will be famine and death and killing and much bloodshed. {17.24} And in that time people will

[116] In the Syriac recensions the anecdote about the cow (which obviously has no basis in Islamic tradition) leads to the statement that the book is called 'the Chapter of the Cow' (*Sūrat al-Baqara*). Here the name of the book is instead 'Furqān' which is a Qur'anic term (probably going back to the Syriac *purqānā* 'salvation') meaning, among others, the Qur'an, according to the Qur'an itself (Q 25:1). On the basis of the root of the word (*f-r-q* 'to divide') it was believed that Furqān was the ultimate tool to decide between right and wrong (Bashear, 'The Title «*Fārūq*»', pp. 48–50). According to Ibn Hishām the verse in which the Qur'an asserts the revelation of the Furqān (Q 3:4) was revealed when the Christian disputation of Najrān gave the Prophet some of their own interpretations of the Qur'an. The answer to them came in the form of the Qur'anic verse in question so as to confront them with the Decisive Factor that revealed the falsehood of their doctrines (Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat sayyidinā Muḥammad*, vol. 1, pp. 403–404). Here in the *Legend* we find an interpretation of the term which is diametrically opposed to the Muslim view. The suggestion is that the term *furqān* is related to *mufarraq*, 'disjointed', 'made up of different parts'. Probably with the same word-play in mind, the ninth-century Christian scholar Qusṭā ibn Lūqā, in his refutation of the inimitability of the Qur'an, talks about the process of the collection of the Qur'an and says that the sources show that 'it came down dispersed, in different pieces, not as a unity set down in writing', *nazala manshūran ma'a tafarruq ghayr majmū' mudawwan*; Samir and Nwyia, 'Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne', p. 638 (t), p. 639 (tr).

[117] The prophecies of the monk that appear in this section form a more elaborate version of the vision described in {3}. For the identification of the individual figures, see above Ch. 3.

الزمان تكون الناس طعاما لطير[1] السماء وسباع الارض {17.25} ويشتد نيرهم
اكتر ما[2] كان قبلهم[3] سبعة اضعاف {17.27} وتبيع الناس **كل *شي[4]
يملكوه[5] ⌜من اجل[6] الخراج وادا فني[7] كل شي لهم باعوا[8] بنيهم وبناتهم
بسبب الجزيه تم يهربون[9] من بلد الي بلد من كترة الظلم والخراج[10] وادا
قطعوا[11] رجاهم ⌜ولم ينفعهم هروبهم شيا[12] ⌜وادا لم[13] يبق لهم شيا[14] يرجعوا[15]
اليه[16] فعند[17] دلك كل من ليس له امانه **وتيقه *ويقين صالح[18] بربنا
يسوع المسيح[19] ولا يعرف الغايه والعاقبه[20] والمكافاه[21] *الدي يجزي[22] ⌜الله
بها[23] الصديقين[24] كما قال في انجيله[25] المقدس ⌜عن الدين[26] يصبرون علي[27]
الشدايد والجوع والعطش ⌜يكتر برهم والدين هم خلاف دلك ولم يكن فيهم
صبر[28] ادا[29] لحقهم هدا[30] يكفرون بالمسيح[31] ولم[32] يدكرون ما صنع بهم *فانه[33]
اشتراهم[34] | بدمه وخلصهم بنفسه ولا[35] يفكرون في مكافاته *لهم بعد دلك 169b
ادا[36] هم صبروا ⌜علي الشدايد الجاريه[37] عليهم[38] والدين لهم امانه قويه[39] ويقين
حسن ورجاء صالح[40] بربنا يسوع المسيح[41] يكافيهم عن صبرهم ⌜من اجله[42]
⌜ويباركهم ويبارك[43] بيوتهم ⌜وبنوهم وبناتهم[44] ومنازلهم[45] وقراهم[46]
واراضيهم[47] ويخلصهم[48] من عبوديه العرب ومن ظلم بني هاشم .

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[1] لطاير VWXY [2] i + م VWX, i + ب Y [3] < Y [4] ** كلما VW [5] يملكونه VWX [6] ⌜ منجل
[7] نفد VW [8] * قنايهم وكل شيا لهم حتي Y [9] f ا VW [10] وطلب الخراج Y [11] تطعوا V [12] ⌜
[13] ⌜ ولم VWXY [14] ما Y [15] f ن XY [16] < Y [17] i < VWX [18] < VW, ** ويقين قوي
الانجيل X [24] * < X [23] ⌜ ~ Y [22] يجازي Y [21] f < V [20] والعافيه Y [19] < Y, * بالمسيح X
[30] هكدي V, هكدا W, [29] i + و VW [28] ⌜ < VWXY [27] + تلك Y [26] lege ⌜ والدين VWXY
[36] f < VW [35] f م Y [34] * واشتراهم VW [33] i ل XY [32] f ا VWX, ثم Y [31] بسيدهم Y + لم
[37] ⌜ لانها محن جاريه VWY [38] + ويكون امره يجود ويجود تمر بهم وتغربلهم وتسبكهم كالابريز يتبت ولا يحترق
تجود للمضطهدين الدي اذا لحقهم هدا اللواحق والهوان من العرب طلبوا الفر وهربوا اليهم وتركوا السجود
الي الشرق بادوا زوايا العالم ويادوا نواحي الدنيا وبادوا اركان السما والارض وبادوا مجري الفلك ومدبر العالم
تمر بهم ويغربلهم متل الحنطه وتسبكهم وتصقيهم+ VW, بحكمته احكم الحاكمين تم يسجدون الي البريا
كالابريز الدي يثبت ولا يحترق ويجود ويكون امره محمود والمضطهدون الدي ادا لحقهم هدا الدوايق والهوان
من العرب وطلبوا الغز ودهبوا اليهم وتركوا السجود الي الشرق وبادوا زويا العالم وبادوا نواحي الدنيا وبادوا
X, * < Y الركان السماء والارض وبادوا مجر الفلك ومدبر العالم بحكمته احكم الحاكمين ثم يسجدوا للبريه
وامانتهم به وتركهم [43] ⌜ V منجله [42] ⌜ Y انه X, فهو+ [41] + صحيح VWXY [40] + تابته Y [39]
VWXY [44] ⌜ < VWXY [45] < W [46] < X [47] وارضهم وهربهم من بلد الي بلد عراه حفاه جياع
وارضهم وهروبهم X, وهروبهم من بلد الي بلد عراه حفاه جياعه عطاشه VW, عطاش وترجاهم خلاصه
فانه W, ومخلصهم [48] Y من بلد الي بلد عراه حفاه جياع عطاش وهم مترجين رحمته معتقدين بخلاصه لهم
Y وعودتهم X, يخلصهم

become food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. {17.25} Their yoke will be seven times harder on them than before. {17.27} And people will sell everything they possess for the *kharāj* and when all they have runs out, they will sell their sons and daughters for the *jizya*. Then they will flee from place to place because of the great oppression and the *kharāj*. And when all their hope is cut off, when their flight is of no avail, and when they have nothing left, they will return to Him. Then all who have no firm belief and righteous faith in our Lord Jesus Christ will not know the end and the conclusion and the reward that God grants the righteous, as He said in the Holy Gospel. [And] those who will endure the calamities and the hunger and the thirst, their piety will increase, but those who do not and who have no steadfastness when these things befall them, they will deny Christ and they will not remember what he did for them, as he ransomed them | with his blood 169b and redeemed them with his own self, and they will not contemplate his reward for them after that, if they endure the calamities that befall them. And those who have strong belief and good faith and righteous hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, He will reward them for their hope in him; He will bless them and bless their houses, their sons and their daughters, their dwelling places, their villages and their lands. And he will liberate them from the servitude to the Arabs and the oppression by the Sons of Hāshim.

وعند[1] دلك تزداد[2] بنو[3] هاشم فرح علي فرح *وعظمه[4] علي عظمه[5] **وتجبر
⌜علي تجبر[6] {17.28} ويخربون المدن[7] الكبار *التي[8] كانت[9] فيها الملوك القدما
{17.32} ويكون عظماوهم[10] في بابل[11] مكتفين[12] مقيدين بالحديد[13] {17.35}
وتمتلي ارض بابل من الناس من كل[14] امه[15] من اربع[16] افاق[17] الدنيا[18] {17.38}
وفي[19] دلك الزمان *تنقطع[20] حكمة الحكما وتفتخر الحمقا[21] ويصير العالم حقير
والعاقل جاهلا والعفيف ابلها[22] والحق[23] باطلا والباطل حقا ⌜هدا كله[24]
يكون[25] في دلك الزمان صوابا عند الناس لانهم جعلوا لانفسهم نواميس
واحكاما غير معقوله ⌜ويصير الحق ونواميسه جاهله[26] {17.40} وترتفع
الرحمه من[27] الناس ⌜حتي الاباء[28] لا يرحمون ابنايهم[29] والابنا[30] لا يرحمون
ابايهم[31] والاخ يكدب اخاه ⌜ويهين قرابته[32] {17.43} والاشجار لا تتمر[33]
والارض لا تعطي[34] غلايتها ⌜والبراري والجبال | لا تعطي زرعها[35]والامطار 170a
لا تكون[36] في وقتها ويصير الصيف في الشتا والشتا في الصيف وفي[37] دلك
الزمان ليس تكون[38] سنه[39] الا وياتي فيها[40] رجز[41] الله[42] علي الارض اما بردا
واما[43] جليدا[44] واما[45] حرا[46] او[47] جرادا *⌜او وبا[48] او قتل وخراب {17.52}
وتظهر[49] علامات[50] في السماء وتظلم[51] وينحدر[52] تراب من السماء[53] وما[54] تنير[55]
الكواكب .

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[1] i < VX [2] i ي V, تزد Y [3] بنوا Y [4] وعظما V [5] f < VX, f ا W, * وعظم شان Y [6] ⌜ < Y
[7] البلاد Y [8] الدي Y [9] كانوا * VW الدين Y [10] خراب ويصيرون Y [11] + وتبنون المدن في بابل VW, ويبنون
[12] مكبلين Y [13] + ولتخضع لبابل مدن الملوك وتسجد لها V, ويبطل لبابل مدن الملوك
[14] سايرY [15] الامم Y [16] f + ة VWY [17] اقطار W [18] العالم W, ** < X [19] i < VW وتسجد لها Y
[20] تبطل Y [21] الحكما Y [22] * يجعلون X [23] i < X [24] ⌜ < X [25] i + و X فتصير عند الناس مطيعه ⌜
[26] جاهلة Y [27] + بين Y [28] ⌜ والابا VWXY البنين [29] فتصير عند الناس بالعقل ويصير ناموس VW, بالعقل ويصير ناموس الحق واحكامه جهلا متقمع عن العقل
[30] والبنين Y [31] الابا VWX, اباتهم Y [32] + القريب V, قرابيه Y, ⌜ < والاولاد VW, الابنا Y
[33] يتمروا X [34] تودى VWX [35] ⌜ ولا عشبها ينبت Y [36] تاتي Y [37] i < VWY [38] ي i Y [39] <
[40] + من Y [41] < X صقيع يابس او X [42] + وغضبا Y [43] i < X [44] + وعصاره VW [45] i < X [46] او خراب * X, واما وبا اما غلا اما VW, واما وبا واما [47] عصاره او دم Y [48] ⌜ < VWX [49] واما VW
[50] + او وبي او Y [51] + تحدث Y [52] فاما تظلم Y [53] + ورياح مختلفه Y [54] واما Y [55] تنتتر?lege VWY
[51] او تظلم الشمس والقمر VW, اما تظلم الشمس والقمر X, الشمس والقمر
[52] واما ينحدر VW, او يحدث Y
[53] ام Y
[54] اما VW, اما X, lege?

Then the Sons of Hāshim will pile joy upon joy, grandeur upon grandeur, and pride upon pride. {17.28} They will devastate great cities of the ancient kings, {17.32} and their nobles will be in Babel, handcuffed and fettered in iron.[118] {17.35} And the land of Babel will be full of people from every nation from the four corners of the world. {17.38} In that time the wisdom of the wise will cease to be and the fools will glorify themselves. The learned man will become despised and the man of reason will become irrational, the virtuous foolish, the truth nonsense and nonsense the truth. This will all be proper in that time, in the eyes of the people, because they have made irrational laws and rules for themselves, and the truth and its laws become irrational. {17.40} Mercy is taken away from the people, to such an extent that fathers will not have mercy on their sons and sons will not have mercy on their fathers. A man will call his brother a liar and he will be contemptuous of his relatives. {17.43} And the trees will not bear fruit and the earth will not give its riches and the plains and the mountains | 170a will not produce their crops. And rain will not come at the right time. And the summer will come in winter and the winter will come in summer. And in that time there will not be a year in which the wrath of God does not come, either as cold or frost or heat or locusts or plague or killing or destruction. {17.52} Signs will appear in the sky and it will become dark. And dust will come down from the sky [or] stars will be [scattered about].

[118] Cf. Psa 149:8.

{17.53} عند[1] دلك[2] تكتر العرب كنجوم[3] السماء ورمل[4] البحر وتبنا المساجد علي ابواب الكنايس وفي الاسواق[5] وفي[6] المواضع[7] ووسط[8] الارض *⌜وبين المقابر[9] ⌜وعلي الاجاجير[10] والمنازل[11] والبيوت[12] وادا سمعوا صوت[13] المودن خرجوا[14] ⌜الي الصلاه[15] بسرعه الي المسجد ويمتلي[16] منهم حتي[17] يقفوا خارج[18] المسجد صفوفا[19] {17.56} **فادا[20] عملوا هكدا اعلموا[21] ان[22] قد دنا تمام ملكهم وخروجهم من بلاد الشام الي بلاد[23] ابايهم .

{17.57} وهاشم يولد سبع[24] ملوك[25] واحد[26] باسمين واتنين باسم[27] واتنين[28] في التوراه وواحد بتلاتة[29] علامات وواحد[30] بسبع[31] علامات[32] لاسمه[33] {17.58} فادا تمت هده الامور[34] اعلموا[35] انه[36] قد دنا[37] ملك بني هاشم {17.59} وعند[38] دلك ينتبهون[39] بعض علي بعض كمتل المنتبه من النوم وكل واحد يقول عن نفسه ان الملك لي[40] {17.60} ⌜ويحرضهم الله بالغضب[41] بعضهم[42] علي بعض *ويكون[43] هلاكهم وفناهم فيه[44] ويطرحون حيف ⌜بعضهم علي | بعض[45] . 170b

{17.62} وعند[46] دلك[47] يوخد ملكهم[48] ويعطي[49] للمهدي[50] ابن[51] علي ⌜ابن فاطمه[52] ويجي[53] اليهم من الغرب من جبل نانوس[54] {17.63} ويكافيهم متل اعمالهم {17.64} ويقع[55] مدن واصوارها[56] وحصونها[57] {17.65} وتصير لطير[58] السماء مسكنا {17.66} ويتم عليها[59] قول داوود[60] النبي[61] *الويل لك[62] يا بابل[63] الويل لك[64] يا شنعا[65] ومدينه[66] الكلدانيين[67] .

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[1] i + و X, i + ف Y هدا كله [2] VWXY ومتل رمل [4] VWXY متل نجوم [3] Y والسكك + [5] Y + [6] Y مع المنازل [11] Y والاحاجير ⌜ VW, والمقابر ⌜ [9] VWY الاجاخير [10] i < VW [8] V < كل Y [7] X < الى ان [17] X ت i [16] X بالصلاه ⌜ W, الصلوات [15] Y يجروا W, جروا كلهم V, جروا [14] Y < [13] VW, + انهم Y [18] X في [19] VW صفوفا + [20] VW و i [21] VWY ف + i [22] VWY ه + f [23] موضع Y بستت VW, < i [29] Y يكون اسمهم + [28] W بسم [27] Y يسما + [26] Y يكون + [25] VW ة + f [24] Y < [36] VWY ف + i [35] VW كلها + [34] Y يكون [33] i < VWY سبعه [31] Y واخر [30] VW, f + ة Y ويرمي الله في قلوبهم الغضب ⌜ [41] Y ه f [40] Y ايضا يختلفون ويقومون [39] VW ف i [38] VWY تم [37] Y بعض [42] VW ويكونوا [43] VW منهم وبهم [44] VW [45] ⌜ ~ (213) VW, * < Y (hom) [46] i < VW, Y هدا [47] Y منهم وينتزع سلطانهم + VW, [48] Y ويطلع V, ا f [49] Y ا i [50] Y < [51] VW وفاطمه ⌜ lege [52] Y لانه يجي VW, ب i [54] Y تابوس VW, i < [53] Y لطاير [58] VW م f [59] Y داود [60] Y القايل + [61] VWY ويقطع lege [55] Y وعدة [56] Y < [63] VW * < [67] X ** < [66] lege i < VWY شنعار lege [65] Y ي + f [64] Y ويهدم الحصون [57] Y اصوار Y ي + f [62]

{17.53} Then the Arabs will become as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea. Mosques will be built at the doors of churches, and on markets and at sites and in the middle of the land and between the graves and on flat roofs and dwelling places and houses. And when they hear the voice of the muezzin, they will come out quickly to the mosque for the prayer. And it will be so full that they will even stand outside the mosque in rows. {17.56} And when they do this, know that the end of their rule and their exit from the land of Syria to the land of their fathers have drawn close.[119]

{17.57} Hāshim will beget seven kings, one with two names and two with one name, two in the Torah and one with three signs and one with seven signs to his name. {17.58} When these things have been fulfilled, know that the rule of the Sons of Hāshim has come to an end. {17.59} Then they will awaken each other as one who wakes up from sleep.[120] And every one of them will say about himself: 'The rule belongs to me'. {17.60} And God will incite them against each other with rage. {17.61} Their destruction and their disappearance will be brought about by themselves. And they will treat each other unjustly. | 170b

{17.62} Then their rule will be taken, and given to the Mahdī son of ʿAlī and Fāṭima. He will come to them from the West, from the Mountain of Nanus.[121] {17.63} He will recompense them according to their deeds {17.64} and he will pull down cities, their walls and their strongholds, {17.65} and they will become a dwelling place for the birds of the sky. {17.66} In them will be fulfilled the saying of the David the prophet 'Woe to you, Babel, woe to you Shinar, city of the Chaldeans'.[122]

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[119] This statement betrays the Syrian perspective of the redactor; it seems unlikely to me that for instance an Iraqi would be predicting the disappearance of the Sons of Hāshim from Syria specifically.

[120] First verb is intransitive (*yantabihūna*).

[121] The name of the mountain is unclear. Perhaps it goes back to 'Tabor' written without diacritical punctuation (manuscript Y has: Tābus; other recensions do not include this phrase).

[122] Cf. Rev 18:10.

{17.68} ويكون[1] في ايام المهدي ابن فاطمه خلاص وسلام لم يكون[2] *في[3] العالم متله[4] وهو يحفظ وصية محمد ابيه[5] وبنوه من بعده {17.69} ⌜ويكون من[6] محمد الاول الي محمد الاخر الدي[7] فيه[8] يتم ملكهم اربعه وعشرون[9] ملكا من بني محمد[10] .

{17.71} عند[11] دلك يخرج من بني سفيان[12] من الغرب[13] لابس[14] لباس الدم ويطرد[15] بني اسماعيل الي جبل اترب {17.72} ويقتلون الرجال[16] والنساء والمشايخ والصبيان ⌜ولا يشفقون[17] عليهم[18] .

{17.73} عند دلك[19] ياتي من الغرب[20] ⌜الدين هم[21] صفرانا[22] المغربي[23] ويدخلون[24] ارض الموعد ويبلغون ارض[25] الشام {17.74} وينكسروا[26] من الاسد وهو المهدي ابن عايشه[27].

{17.76} ويكون حرده[28] وغضبه علي بنو[29] اسماعيل والنصاري[30] {17.78} ويهدم[31] الكنايس والديارات ويطرح[32] المدابح {17.79} وتكون شده عظيمه في العالم لم يكن متلها[33] والدين يموتون ⌜من الجوع[34] اكتر من الدين يموتون[35] بالسيف | {17.80} وكتيرين[36] من بني[37] الكنيسه يظلون[38] عن[39] 171a الحق ويدهبون[40] الي الشياطين ويدبحون[41] لها[42] {17.83} وفي تلك الايام[43] تقول[44] الناس للجبال اسقطي علينا وللروابي[45] اطمرونا[46] {17.85} ومن صبر[47] للاخير[48] فهو[49] يحيي[50] {17.93} فادا[51] ⌜حل هدا جميعه[52] اعلموا[53] انه[54] قد دنا خراب الدنيا .

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Y مثله قط في العالم ,VX (312) ~ * ,W < 4 W اول + 3 X تكن ,VY يكن 2 Y وبعد دلك كله يكون 1
رجلا + 12 Y ف + i ,X و + i 11 X < 10 VWY وعشرين 9 Y < 8 Y 7 Y ومن ⌜ 6 Y جده 5
Y يشتفون 17 Y < 16 Y ثم انه يطرد ,VWX ويطردون 15 X الابس ,VW اللابس 14 WX العرب 13
بالمغرى 23 Y سفران ,VW صفره 22 Y الدي هو ⌜ 21 VW العرب 20 Y هدا 19 Y بغير شفقه ⌜ 18 VW
X خزيه 28 X < 27 VWY تم ينكسرون 26 Y ثم يدخلون ,VW f ا 24 VW, < X
VWX بالجوع ⌜ 34 Y قط + 33 Y وتطرح 32 Y وتنهدم ,X وتهدم 31 Y ايضا + 30 VWY ي f 29
+ منهج 39 VWXY يضلون lege 38 Y اولاد 37 Y وكثيرون ,VWX وكثير 36 VWXY تقتلون 35
Y وللاكام 45 VW و + i 44 VW يكون هدا كله + 43 X < Y, < 42 Y ويطغون 41 Y ويدهبين 40
Y يخلص ,VWX f ا 50 Y < 49 Y الي المنتها ,VWX الي الاخر 48 VWX امن 47 X < Y, غطونا 46
Y كانت هده الشدايد كلها وهده الاحزان ,VWX كانت هده الشدايد كلها والاحزان ⌜ 52 VWX و i 51
Y ف + i 53 Y 54 f < VW

{17.68} And in the days of Mahdī son of Fāṭima there will be deliverance and peace, the like of which was never in the world. He will observe the testament of his father Muḥammad and his sons after him. {17.69} And there will be from the first Muḥammad until the last Muḥammad, with whom their rule ends, twenty four kings of the Sons of Muḥammad.

{17.71} Then one of the Sons of Sufyān will come from the West, dressed in the clothes of blood, and he will chase the Sons of Ishmael to the Mountain of Yathrib[123] {17.72} and they will kill men and women and old people and youngsters mercilessly. {17.73} Then from the West those who are the [yearling goats] will come and they will enter the Promised Land and reach the land of Syria.[124] {17.74} And they will be defeated by the lion, who is the Mahdī son of ʿĀ'isha. {17.76} His anger and his fury will be directed at the Sons of Ishmael and the Christians. {17.78} And he will destroy churches and monasteries, and he will overturn the altars. {17.79} There will be great distress in the world, the like of which never was. And those who die from famine are more than those who die by the sword. | {17.80} And many of the sons 171a
of the church will stray from the truth, and they will go to the devils and bring sacrifices to them. {17.83} In those days the people will say to the mountains: 'Fall upon us!', and to the hills 'Cover us!'.[125] {17.85} And whoever perseveres to the end will live.[126] {17.93} And know that when all of this has come to pass, the destruction of the world has drawn near.

[123] All other recensions have Israel instead of Ishmael.

[124] The manuscript has *ṣufrānā l-maghribī*. The corresponding prediction in {3.16} contains the correct reading 'goat', which the other recensions have as well.

[125] * Luke 23:30, cf. Hos. 10:8.

[126] * Matt 24:13, Mark 13:13.

{17.94} فحينيدء[1] يقبل متل الشمس اجود الملوك[2] من المشرق وهو[3] لابس لباسا اخضر ويكون صلاح في العالم لم[4] يكن متله قط[5] وتبنا البيع ويظهر الحق ويقوم[6] ملك من[7] بني اسماعيل .
{17.100} ويقتل[8] الروم {17.101} ويملكوا[9] العالم[10] اسبوع[11] ونصف سابوع {17.103} عند[12] دلك[13] تضطرب[14] ارياح[15] السماء ⌜وتقوم الممالك[16]⌝ بعضها علي[17] بعض[18] {17.104} وتجي الترك[19] الدين هم متل[20] الدياب[21] وتحارب[22] بعضها[23] بعض {17.107} وتفتح[24] ابواب الخزي[25] ويخرج[26] اجوج[27] وماجوج الدين هم متل[28] الكلاب {17.108} *ويقتلون[29] كل[30] بشر[31] علي الارض[32] {17.109} فحينيدء[33] يخرج ابن الهلاك[34] يشبه التنين[35] ويبلع الكل بلا رحمه في ساعه[36] {17.110} ⌜ويجمعهم الله[37]⌝ الي مكان[38] واحد ويبعت[39] عليهم ملاك رجزه فيقتلهم[40] ساعه واحده عند دلك يكون[41] *عند[42] القديسين[43] فرح[44] عظيم لا يبطل الي الابد وعند الخطاه[45] عدابا وبكا وصرير الاسنان[46] الي الابد .

{18} ** *فاما[47] انا[48] مرهب الراهب[49] اقمت في الدير | مع بحيره[50] مده طويله {18.1} وحدتني ووصف لي هده القصه[51] ⌜وكل هدا الخبر[52]⌝ رايته[53] وشاهدته وبين[54] لي[55] احواله واسبابه ⌜وتحقيقه بامره بين يديه[56]⌝ . 171b
{18.2} وقال[57] لي لا[58] تلوموني[59] انت[60] ولا يلمني[61] الدي[62] يسمعه[63] فيما[64] قد[65] فعلته[66] ووضعته[67] .

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[1] عند دلك VW, عن دلك X, فعند دلك Y [2] + واكرمهم Y [3] < VWXY [4] + و X [5] < VW
[6] lege ويتم فيه VWXY [7] lege < VWXY [8] lege ويقبلون VWX, ويطلعوا Y [9] ويملكون البلاد
[10] + و VW [11] lege سابوع VWXY [12] + و X, i [13] هدا Y ف +
[14] تتطرب X [15] < Y [16] الملوك VW, ⌜ < Y [17] مع Y [18] ⌝ علي بعضهم بعضا VW
[19] القوم
[20] < Y [21] الدباب VW [22] ويحارب Y [23] بعضهم مع Y [24] وتنفتح VWY [25] الحري V, الجري W,
[26] الغرب Y [27] i < VW [28] < Y [29] ويقبلون V, ويقيلون W [30] + ب i [31] i < VW,
[32] < X [33] عند دلك VWY, وعند دلك X [34] + الدى VW [35] العظيم +
[36] + واحده XY [37] ⌝ وان الله سبحانه يجمعهم Y [38] موضعا Y [39] ويرسل
[40] + في VW, فيفنيهم في Y ت i [41] Y [42] < Y [43] * للقديسين VWX [44] + ب i [45] الخاطيين Y
[46] اسنان X [47] < Y [48] * فانا VW, فقال X [49] الخاطي
[50] بحريا Y [51] الصفه VWY [52] ⌝ وهدا الخبر كله VWY [53] + و i [54] فتبت Y [55] < VW [56] lege ⌝ وبامره حققته VWY [57] وبين يديه كتبته VW, < Y [58] + ف i Y وهو يقول
[59] تلمنى VW, تلومني W, i < Y [60] + يا اخى VW [61] يلومني [62] من VW, كل من Y [63] i < VW,
[64] + ا Y لاجل ما [65] < Y [66] f < VW [67] وصنعته VW, وتممته Y, ** < X

{17.94} Then the greatest king, dressed in a green garment, will come from the East, like the sun. And there will be great peace in the world, the like of which was never before. Churches will be built and the truth will become manifest. With him the rule of the Sons of Ishmael [will come to an end].

{17.100} The Romans will come {17.101} and rule the world for one great week and a half. {17.103} Then the winds of heaven will be stirred up and kingdoms will rise up against each other. {17.104} And the Turks will come who are like wolves and they will fight each other, {17.107} and the doors of the disgrace will open will open and Gog and Magog will go out, who are like dogs,[127] {17.108} and they will kill every human being on the earth. {17.109} Then the Son of Perdition will go out, resembling a dragon, and he will swallow all without pity in an hour, {17.110} and God will gather them in one place, and He will send the angel of His wrath to them, and he will kill them in one hour.

Then there will be great rejoice with the holy, which will not pass until eternity, and with the sinners there will be torment and weeping and gnashing of teeth until eternity.'

{18} Now I, the monk Marhab, stayed in the monastery | with Bahira 171b
for a long time, {18.1} and he told and described this story to me. And I saw and witnessed this whole history and he elucidated its circumstances and its causes for me. In his presence I wrote it down and at his command I edited it.

{18.2} And he said to me: 'Do not reproach me for what I have done and set down, neither you nor whoever hears it'.

[127] *Abwāb al-khizy*, translated as 'doors of disgrace'; however, the term is probably a transcription of the Syriac ܚܙܝ (cf. WS: ܚܙܝ ܕܨܦܘܢ 'treasuries of the North'). For that term, see WS: p. 369, n. 90.

{18.3} قال[1] مرهب ***⌜بعد فروغ[2] النبوه التي[3] تنبا بها بحيره[4] تنهد **وبكا {18.4}علي *ما فعله من الخطيه المخالفه لله {18.6} فبكيت[5] عليه وقلت[6] الله يرحم عبيده الدين يومنون بقيامته فالتفت[7] {18.7} وقال لي يا اخي مرهب[8] اعلم ان دنوبي جلبت علي ⌜بما فعلته وتضمنه هدا الكتاب[9] {18.8} وانه[10] سوف[11] يقع في يد كتير من النصاري[12] ويلوموني[13] علي *صنعي[14] الدي[15] صنعته[16] بهم {18.9} لاني[17] اعلم اني[18] قد ايدت[19] عليهم **اعدا الي[20] فنا دولته[21] وانقضاها[22] {18.10} وسوف يلحقهم في اخر[23] مدته[24] *ما ليس لهم به طاقه ⌜من الدل[25] {18.11} وانا قبل ان اري هده[26] الرويا الذي[27] رايتها[28] ⌜في طور[29] سينا[30] درست[31] ساير كتب[32] ⌜نبوات الانبياء والتوراه[33] وما وصفته[34] الحكما[35] من ⌜حكمه لقران الكواكب بعضهم لبعض بايترانها[36] واحكامها وما دل عليه لملك[37] بني اسماعيل الدين[38] هم اشرار الناس وما سلطه[39] الله القوي علي[40] عبيده {18.12} تم بعد دلك نطرت الرويا الدي[41] شرحتها[42] في كتابي هدا بطور سينا وامرت[43] ان افعل[44] الدي فعلته المتقدم[45] | دكره[46] من امر[47] 172a الملوك[48] الدي ⌜ضمنته الكتاب[49] بلا خفيه[50] .

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[1] i + ف X, i + و Y [2] X, ⌜ ان فرغت [3] XY الدي Y ان من بعدما [4] Y بحيريا [5] ** Y بكا
Y, *** الراهب بكاء عظيم فقلت له لماذا هدا البكاء فقال لي علي خطيتي التي فعلتها ولم يامرني الله بها فاقبلت اشهد لكم يا اخوتي انه بعد ما فرغ يكلمني بكلام هده النبوه جميعه اخد يتنهد ويبكي علي الخطيه التي فعلها VW, الي + X الخطيه الدي فعلها ولم يامره الله بها وقال *VWY, له + [6] VW ولم يامره الله بها فاقبلت هدا ,VWX هدا الامر كله الدي شرحته لك في اعلا كتابي هدا ⌜ [9] VW انا + [8] XY ثم انه التفت الي ويكون في ايديهم + [12] V > [11] VWXY وانا اعلم انه [10] Y الامركله الدي شرحته لك باول كتابي هدا شيعه وسيف قاطع علي اعدايهم الخارجين عن الناموس وكتير منهم ادا سمعوا ما قلت تسر وتبتهج قلوبهم وكتير منهم ادا سمعوا بي جماعة من الناس يسر به+ VW, لما وهبه الله المسيح من دينه الصحيح وكتير منهم ويكون في يديهم سيفا قاطع علي اعدايهم الخارجين+ X, ويبتهج لما اوهب الله من دينه الصحيح وكتير منهم من الناموس وكثيرا منهم ادا سمعوا في جماعة الناس تسر به وتبتهج لما وهبه المسيح من الصحه في دينه وكثير تعديت [19] VW انني [18] V لانني [17] X ا + f [16] Y ما قد *[15] X صنعتي [14] VWXY < i [13] Y منهم VW, ابتديت X, جلبت Y حين + [20] Y [21] lege f + م X [22] X, > X [23] Y وهي انقضا سنه الخير اواخر [24] XY هده المده من الدل وحمل X, lege هدا المده Y [25] ⌜ X > [26] ** وكتبت لهم بما اتحققت ان عند انقضي تلك المده يقع عليهم كل هدا الاحزان والشدايد التي لا يطيقون حملها ولكن ليس مني هدا غير انني هدا الدي قد *VWX, بطور ⌜ [29] VW ما [27] VW قلت دلك قبل لن اسبق ورايت من من التوريه وكتب ⌜ [33] VWY الكتب [32] Y واني درست X, و + i [31] VW كنت + [30] Y رايته بطور [37] ⌜ اقترانها lege [36] X ه f [35] Y صنعته [34] Y من التوراه وكتب الانبياء ,VWX الانبيا وما وصفته الانبيا الناس + [40] Y ا + f [39] VW < f [38] VWXY الحكمه وهبوط الكواكب بعضها علي بعض وصعود ملك في + [46] Y من ما قد تقدم ,VWX مما تقدم [45] Y ي i [44] X < f [43] VWX لك + [42] Y التي [41] X كتبته ,VW كتبت به لهم ⌜ [49] VWX القول [48] X الامور [47] Y في كتابي هدا + ,VWX اعلا كتابي هدا Y خوف ,VW خيفه [50] Y مضيت اليهم ,X لهم

{18.3} Marhab said: 'After the end of the prophecy which Bahira prophesied he sighed and wept {18.4} about the sin which he had committed against God. {18.6} And I wept for him and said 'God has mercy on His servants who believe in His resurrection'.

Then he turned to me {18.7} and he said to me: 'O brother Marhab, know that I have brought my guilt upon myself by what I did and what this book contains.{18.8} It will fall into the hands of many Christians and they will reproach me for what I did to them, {18.9} because I know that I have played into the hands of those who will be their enemies until the time when their power disappears and comes to an end, {18.10} and at the end of this period they will be overcome by unbearable degradation.

{18.11} Before I saw this vision, which I saw at Mount Sinai, I studied all the books with prophecies of the Prophets and the Torah and the things described by the learned regarding astrology on the basis of the conjunctions and rules of the stars and what it indicated about the reign of the Sons of Ishmael, who are the worst of all people, and what God Almighty imposed on his servants.[128] {18.12} After that I saw the vision on Mount Sinai, which I have expounded in this book of mine. And I was commanded to do what I did, what I have mentioned | before regarding the affair of the kings, which I have 172a
unreservedly recorded in the book.[129]

[128] This is the only recension to suggest that Baḥīrā occupied himself with astrology. This idea can be encountered in a small number of other Eastern and Western sources as well. See Ch. 6, pp. 200–201.

[129] The 'affair of the kings' must refer to the monk's counsel to the Byzantine and Persian emperors, recounted in {4} above.

{18.13} فاكتب[1] عني تمام خطيتي وما[2] قد وصفته في الكتاب الدي قد[3] جعلته يشهد له فيه[4] بالنبوه والرساله {18.14} وبما[5] قد اجتريت[6] علي الله فيه وعلي ⌜سيدي والاهي[7] المسيح {18.16} بعد ان حرصت[8] ان تكون[9] نبوته[10] باسم[11] التالوت[12] الموحد[13] الاب والابن والروح القدس[14] {18.17} ⌜اد لا[15] يستطيع *يدكر دلك من [16] كترة[17] حزمي[18] وجزمي[19] علي الله {18.18} لاني[20] اردت[21] ان اتبت ملك بني *اسماعيل لكي يتم وعد الله لابراهيم[22] في[23] اسماعيل ولا اشرع ⌜في شئ[24] سواه {18.19} فشرعت[25] له النبوه وجعلت له كتابا[26] وجعلته منزل في الوحي اليه[27] {18.20} ودلك[28] ليتم قول ربنا المسيح[29] في الانجيل المقدس[30] سياتيكم[31] *من[32] بعدي[33] الانبياء[34] الكدبه[35] الويل[36] لمن يتبعهم .

{18.21} ** *وقد جعلت اكتر هدا الكتاب بدكر ⌜اللاهوت والناسوت[37] وام النور[38] الطاهره وجميع العجايب الدي[39] صنعها في بني اسراييل واكدت اللعنه[40] علي بني اسراييل وقربت اليه النصاري .

{18.23} ⌜فاتي الي بعد ايام [41] ودكر ان اصحابه ⌜لا يستطيع احدا منهم[42] يدكر الدي كنت ⌜بينت له من الاشيا الخفيه[43] وانهم لا يحبوا[44] عبادة اوتانهم ودلك ليتم قول ⌜ربنا المسيح[45] في الانجيل[46] لا يستطيع | احدا ⌜من هولاء[47] ياتي الي 172b
الا من ⌜اختاره الاب الدي في السماء[48] .

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[1] و Y ا i [2] ب VWXY [3] < Y [4] < VWXY [5] i < Y [6] اجرمت VWX, جزمت Y [7] يسوع Y, ⌜ [8] الاهي وسيدى يسوع V, الهي وسيدى يسوع W [9] ي i VWX نبيه [10] جزمت واجتهدت كل جهدي Y [11] بسم X, تميل Y [12] ل i Y نبيته X, بينه Y [13] الواحد Y [14] + VW (punctuation unclear V), [15] الاله الواحد Y ⌜ فلا X, ولا Y [16] i + الاله الواحد + X, الاله الواحد ولم يكن يقدر علي دلك + VW, اله واحد Y [17] دكره ابدا * Y بجرمي X, جراائي VW, جرمي Y [18] < VWX, f ه Y [19] لانني Y [20] و X, i + ف V [21] امرت VWX, اثرت Y [22] لابرهيم V [23] f + ه X, * < (hom) Y [24] ⌜ بشي VWY [25] i < VW, واننني شرعت Y [26] الكتاب W [27] < Y [28] < X [29] < Y [30] + VW, ان حيث يقول Y [31] سياتي VWXY [32] < VW [33] * < Y [34] انبيا VW [35] كدبه VW [36] i + ف VWX, فالويل الطويل Y [37] الناسوت واللاهوت Y [38] + السيده Y [39] التي Y [40] < Y [41] ⌜ ومضيت عنه وفيما انا بعض ايام [42] وادا به قد اتاني Y [43] ⌜ ما منهم احدا Y [44] lege + الا Y [45] ⌜ سيدنا ومخلصنا له [46] + الحمد Y [47] ⌜ < Y [48] ⌜ المقدس حيث قال انه Y اجتدبه الاب واختاره Y تبتته لي في الخفاء Y

{18.13} So write, on my behalf, the entirety of my sin, and what I have described in the book, which I made to contain testimony of prophethood and apostleship for him, {18.14} and about how I have ventured against God in it and against my Lord and my God Christ {18.16} after I had strived to let his prophethood be in the name of the Unified Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, {18.17} since he could not mention that because of my great resolution and decisiveness vis-à-vis God, {18.18} because I wanted to confirm the kingdom of the Sons of Ishmael, in order that the promise of God to Abraham about Ishmael would be fulfilled.[130] That was all I intended, {18.19} so I devised prophethood for him and I produced a book for him and I presented it as having come down to him as a revelation, {18.20} so that the words of our Lord Christ in his Gospel 'After me false prophets will come to you. Woe to the one who follows them' would be fulfilled.[131]

{18.21} I have made most of the book mention the Divinity and the humanity, the virtuous Mother of Light, and all the miracles that He worked among the Sons of Israel, and I affirmed the curse on the Sons of Israel and I brought the Christians near to him.

{18.23} Then he came to me after some days and said that none of his companions could recollect what I had explained to him about the mysterious matters, and that they only cared for their idol worship. This was in order that the words of our Lord Christ in his Gospel 'No one can | come to me except the one whom the Father who is in heaven 172b has chosen' be fulfilled.[132]

[130] This sentence is not entirely clear; probably the suggestion is that if Baḥīrā had tried to guide the Arabs to the Trinity with more patience, his mission would have failed and their empire would never have been established.

[131] * Matt. 24:11.

[132] * John 6:44.

{18.24} وكتبت له ايضا قول[1] هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد وقلت له قول لهم قد انزلت هده الايه علي {18.25} ودلك ⌜ان تجريمي علي الله[2] شبهته بالدي كانوا يعبدوه وجعلته صمد مفردا لا يسمع ولا يبصر زي الحجر[3] ودلك كله ⌜بانقطاع رجاي[4] .

{18.26} وكتبت له[5] ايضا يا عيسي ابن مريم انت[6] قلت للناس اتخدوني انا وامي الاهين من دون الله فقال[7] سبحانك ما قلت ⌜ما ليس لي بحق ان كنت قلته فقد علمته[8] تعلم ما في نفسي ولا[9] اعلم ما في نفسك سبحانك انت علام الغيوب وجعلت الرد عليه توبيخ[10] {18.27} وكتير[11] لهدا[12] اوله واخره *وكدلك[13] انه تجري[14] علي الاب والابن والروح القدس {18.28} وقلت[15] هدا الدي قلت[16] .

{18.29} وكتبت له ايضا فيه الدي[17] يومن[18] بما انزل اليك[19] وبما[20] انزل من قبلك الحق[21] ولكن[22] اكترهم لا يعلمون انني[23] اعنيت[24] بدلك[25] الانجيل ⌜الطاهر المقدس[26] وانه[27] الحق وان الدي[28] انزل عليه[29] باطل[30] من قول رجل كداب مريب[31] خاطي علي نفسه {18.30} ويسال[32] الله غفران[33] الخطيه[34] التي[35] اخطاها[36] وانا اقول له[37] الله غفور رحيم[38] .

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[1] وبهدا ومثله كتبت كما *[5] Y يقطع رجاي منه ⌜[4] Y حجر[3] Y يجري وتعدي عليه باني قد ⌜[2] Y هدا قل
اعلنت لكم في الفصل الاول المكتوب وتجريت وختمته بقولي الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد
وكسر[11] Y و + i[10] W انا لا V, وانا لا[9] VW انت ⌜ Y, عالم[8] i < VW[7] f < Y[6] VW وبقولي
و + i[17] X < *, ** < Y[16] i < VW[15] VW بحرمي[14] VW ودلك[13] i < Y[12] i < Y[11] VW, i < Y
VWXY انما[23] i < VWXY[22] < Y[21] VWXY وما[20] i ع Y[19] VWX يامن[18] VWXY
Y الباطل[30] Y هو +[29] X والدي[28] Y رايته[27] X ~ ⌜ Y, <[26] X الا +[25] X انما[24] i < VW,
VW خطاياه[34] X الغفران في[33] Y واما انا اسال X, ونسل[32] i < VW, Y مدنب VWX, مرتب[31]
X < [38] Y ان[37] Y اخطيتها[36] VW الدي[35]

{18.24} And I also wrote for him: '*Say: He is God, the One, the Everlasting God. He begets not nor is He begotten and there is no one like unto Him*',[133] and I told him: 'Say to them "this verse has been revealed to me"' and {18.25} the fact that I likened Him to that which they were accustomed to serve and I made Him solid, solitary, not hearing or seeing, like a stone, is my offense against God.[134] All this happened when my hope had been dashed.

{18.26} And I also wrote for him: '*Jesus son of Mary, did you say to the people "take me and my mother as two gods, next to God"? And he said: "Praise be to You. I do not say that to which I have no right. If I had said it You would have known it. You know what is in me and I do not know what is in You. Praise be to You. You are the Knower of the mysteries*'".[135] And I made the rebuttal to him a reproach.[136]

{18.27} And much more like this. And also that he ventured against the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, {18.28} and I said what I said.[137]

{18.29} And I also wrote in it: 'Believe in what has come down to you and in what has come down to you before. But most of them do not know'.[138] With this I meant the Pure Holy Gospel and that it is the truth and that what has come down to him is falsity from a suspicious liar, who is at fault with himself, {18.30} and asks God for forgiveness for the sin that he has committed.' While I said to him: 'God is forgiving and compassionate'[139].

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[133] Q 112.

[134] The construction of the phrase is unclear; cf. A1. This short *sūra* is regarded as a clear-cut repudiation of the doctrine of the Incarnation and was used in Muslim anti-Christian propaganda for this reason. However, here and in other Christian Arabic apologetic works the *sūra* is taken as a sign that the Qurʾan concedes to the idolatry of the Arabs. See for this theme: Roggema, 'Muslims as crypto-idolaters', pp. 11–13. For similar interpretations in Byzantine writings, see: Sahas, '"Holosphyros?"'.

[135] Q 5:116.

[136] The verse accuses Christians of polytheism. As in the case of Q 112, quoted just before, the accusation is turned around and cast back at Muhammad's followers who were prone to idolatry, according to the above. The key term here is 'reproach' or 'admonition' (*tawbīkh*) which is the function of the verse according to *mufassirūn*, inasmuch as it warns and rebukes Christians for this polytheistic veneration of Mary, as well as of Christ (al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 7, p. 89). Here, instead, it is Muhammad who is being reproached. See also above pp. 132–133 for the accusation in Q 5:116 that Christians worship Mary as a divinity.

[137] These sentences are clearly corrupt, and so is the same passage in A1.

[138] Cf. Q 2:4, Q 4:162.

[139] The subject of this clause is Marhab. Cf. A1.

{18.31} تم[1] التفت الي وقال لي يا هدا | الرجل *ان[2] كل[3] الناس اخطوا خطا[4] 173a
يوملون[5] بعده[6] الرحمه من ربهم فاما[7] انا فاخطيت[8] خطيه[9] *وليس[10] بعدها
من المغفره[11] {18.32} ودلك اني[12] ابتديت له بامر شنيع عظيم واني[13] مكنت[14]
هواي[15] وعملت ما ساعدتني عليه نفسي *الخبيته[16] الشيطانيه[17] يا مرهب[18]
ما[19] تري ⌜الي قولي[20] وخبت[21] نفسي[22] {18.33} وكيف خرجت من دياري
وصرت[23] الي ⌜هده البريه[24] القفره[25] الخاويه {18.34} وزرعت[26] فيها زرع
خبيت يبقي[27] علي طول الايام ويدكر[28] الزارع[29] والزوان الدي[30] زرعه[31]
والقيت نفسي بهدا الزرع في نار لا تطفي[32] لهيبها[33] وخرجت من[34] الخراف
شبه الظال[35] وبقيت[36] مديون[37] بخطيتي[38] الدي[39] فعلتها مع ربي والاهي
وبقولي[40] عنه ما[41] لم يومرني[42] به في[43] النبوه في ايام[44] هدا الرجل المدعي[45]
النبوه والرساله ودلك بقولي له[46] والباب[47] الدي فتحته له[48] علي نفسي وعلي
غيري وهو اشد الابواب وجعلت[49] الباطل حقا وحققت المحال[50] .
{18.35} والقيت علي خراف المسيح[51] دياب ناهشه وافاعي[52] وسباع[53]
كاسره[54] والقيت[55] علي الشعب السليم شعب مارد خبيت وجعلتهم منكسين
رووسهم[56] تحت ملك غيرهم {18.36} والزمتهم[57] ايضا جزيه[58] يودوها[59]
طول ايام حياتهم ونكدت[60] عليهم[61] عيشتهم[62] .
{18.37} | فمن عمل[63] هدا الدي[64] وصفته لك ما[65] يرجوا ⌜بعد دلك[66] من 173b
الله ومن مسيحه الدي ارسله ⌜لخلاص العالم رحمه[67] .

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[1] + انه Y [2] i + ف Y [3] كان VX, * انكا W [4] خطايا VWX, < Y [5] + بها V [6] f < V, f + ا X,
ما لها مغفره وايست بعدها * [11] VWX وايست [10] X > [9] Y فاني اخطات [8] VX و i Y بعد الخطاء
* [17] X < [16] Y منه + [15] X نفسي من + [14] Y وكنت قد ,VW وانني [13] VW انني [12] Y من الرحمه
X نفسي الخبيته [22] VW, i < Y حيت [21] VW انني اقول ⌜ ,Y, > [20] Y ا + i [19] VW اخي + [18]
~ Y [24] ⌜ < VW [25] f < XY [26] Y حتي زرعت [27] f ا X [28] Y وسوف تدكر تلك [29] Y الزرع VW,
Y ولا يهدا زفيرها + [33] Y وقيدها ولا يخمد + ,V ا f [32] X < ,VWY, زرعته [31] VW قد + [30] Y المزارع
> i [40] VWY التي [39] VWXY و i [38] VWXY بدنوبي [37] X ونفيت [36] VX الضال [35] Y بين + [34]
VWX, باب VW, امر ?lege [44] Y دكر + ,VW, من [43] VWXY يامرني [42] Y ب + i [41] Y وتقولت
XY الرب [51] V المخال [50] VW اد جعلت [49] VWXY > [48] VW > i [47] W المدهي [45] VW > [46]
Y ثم القيت [55] Y تفسدهم ,X تكسرها ,VW يكسرها [54] Y مع سباع ,W وديات [53] Y تلسعهم + [52] Y
VW, روسهم [56] Y الروس [57] X الرمتهم [58] X ب + i [59] Y يودونها [60] X ب f [61] Y < [62] X <
VW بعد خلاص ⌜ ,Y, او راافه + ,X, > [67] VW < ⌜ [66] Y فكيف [65] Y قد + [64] VW فعل [63]

{18.31} Then he turned to me and said: 'O man, | all people 173a
commit sins, after which they hope for the mercy of their Lord. But I have committed a sin for which there is no forgiveness, {18.32} and that is the fact that I set out on a grave and disgraceful affair with him, and that I yielded to my fancy and did what my wicked devilish self favored. O Marhab, what do you think of my words and the wickedness of my soul, {18.33} and how I left my home and went into this desolate empty desert {18.34} and sowed wicked seed in it, which will remain forever? The sower, with the tares that he sows, will be remembered and by sowing this I threw myself in an unquenchable fire. I left the lambs like a stray one and I remained in debt for the sin that I committed before my Lord and my God and for my words about Him, which He had not commanded me to say, regarding the prophethood in the [affair] of this man who claims prophethood and apostleship on the basis of my words to him. The door which I have opened for myself and for others is the gravest door: I presented falsity as truth and avouched absurdity.

{18.35} I let loose rapacious wolves and serpents and ravenous predators on the lambs of Christ, and I let loose a refractory evil people onto a faultless people. I made them lower their heads under the rule of others {18.36} and I forced the *jizya* upon them, which they will have to pay throughout the days of their lives. And I made their lives miserable. {18.37} | Whoever has done what I have described to you 173b
does not hope afterwards for mercy from God and His Christ whom He sent to save the world.

{18.38} فطوبا[1] لمن صبر ⌜علي دلك[2] من عبيده[3] في[4] طول الايام[5] لملك[6] هولاي[7] القوم **وهي[8] تمام سنيه[9] الاخره[10] .
{18.39} *⌜فقلت له انا[11] مرهب[12] ارجوا رحمة الله[13] والدي[14] اوراك اياته ⌜في السماء[15] وخصك برویاه[16] عن كتير من خلقه وهو الدي يقبل توبة من تاب اليه ولو قبل الموت[17] بيسير[18] .
{18.40} فطابت نفسه بهدا الكلام وقال لي[19] اكتب ما بقي من الامر .
{18.41} تم[20] قال لي[21] بحيره[22] الراهب[23] ⌜بعد هدا الامر[24] اتاني وهو يبكي وقال[25] لي انت الدي[26] فعلت[27] بي هدا الامر يا راهب .
فقلت له ما[28] هو .
{18.42} فقال[29] *⌜لي قالوا[30] اصحابي وبني عمي[31] كل نبي جا[32] ⌜صنع عجايب[33] من احيا الميت واظهار العجايب[34] وغير دلك وانت[35] لم[36] تاتي بشي من دلك[37] *وليس نقبل منك نبوه ⌜دون ان[38] تبرهن لنا برهانا[39] .
{18.43} فقلت له انا اكفيك هدا الامر ان شا الله تعالي فكتبت[40] له ما[41] منعنا[42] نرسل[43] الايات[44] التي[45] اللاتي[46] كدب[47] بها الاولون ولقد اتينا[48] نمود[49] ناقه مبصره[50] فعقرها[51] فدمدم عليها[52] ربك[53] ودلك انني[54] اقضيته[55] بهدا القول لان[56] نمود[57] *اوتي[58] ناقه[59] من موضع لم يعرفوه[60] وغيره اوتي[61] كلام موزون
من روح القدس | الدي اخبرت بما يكون ⌜من قوم[62] اخرين[63] احيوا الموتي[64] 174a
متل حزقيال وغيره وهدا الموضع[65] يكره[66] عليه .

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[1] ولكن طوبا VW [2] ⌜ < VWXY [3] عبيد المسيح المومنين المعتفين باسمه Y [4] < VWY [5] < Y [6] التي
[7] هولاء VW [8] و f Y [9] سنة Y [10] الاخيره VWY [11] فقال ⌜ VW [12] +
[13] قال مرهب فقلت له * ,VW الراهب وهدا لما قاله لي بحزن قلت له لا تحزن يا اخي ولكن Y يا اخي +
[14] i < VW [15] ⌜ < Y [16] f ك V [17] موته VWY [18] بياما يسيره ,VW بيوما واحدا Y [19] +
[20] < VY [21] < VY [22] بحيريا Y [23] + ثم انه V [24] < ,Y ⌜ تم بعد ما تكلم مع دلك الرجل Y يالبي
[25] ما تكلمت به اعني محمد VW [26] < VW [27] عملت Y ثم انه قال
[28] i + و VWY [29] i < Y
[30] ~ VW [31] * بايه ⌜ ,VW فلا [32] ان اصحابي قالوا الي وبنوا عمي واهلي ان Y [33] ,VW يجي جانا Y
[34] + والمعجزات Y [35] + ادا Y [36] i + ف VW [37] هدا
[38] ⌜ VW ادا لم [39] * VW فما نقبلك ولا يكون بيننا وبينك معامله وقد خرجت من عندهم وما اعلم ما
[40] i و ,VW ثم اني كتبت Y [41] i + و VY [42] + معني ان ,VW ابن Y [43] i ت Y [44] i + ب
[45] < VY, الدي W [46] + النبي V, < W, الاني Y [47] ? كتبت (punctuation unclear) VW اعمل Y
[48] امنا Y [49] lege i ت VW, بمورد Y [50] بصورة Y [51] فدبحوها ,VW فحقروها Y [52] f م VW
[53] ربهم Y [54] اني Y [55] lege اسقطه VWY [56] i < Y [57] lege i ت VWY [58] اولي Y [59] * ~ W
[60] يعرفه VWY [61] اوني Y [62] lege ⌜ قبل ان يكون وقوم /VW قبل ان يكون Y [63] i + و VW [64] f ا
[65] الامر V [66] مكسره ,VW فهو مخسرة Y

{18.38} Blessed are those of His servants who persevere throughout the days of the rule of those people, and that is the total of the years of the hireling.'[140]

{18.39} And I, Marhab, said to him: 'Hope for the mercy of God, the One who showed you His signs in heaven and elected you for His vision concerning many of His creatures. He is the One who accepts the repentance of one who repents to Him, even if it is just before his death.'

{18.40} These words made him feel better and he said: 'Write down what still remains of the matter.'

{18.41} Then the monk Baḥīrā said to me: 'Some time later he came to me weeping and said: "O monk, you are the one who did this to me."

So I said to him: 'What is the matter?'

{18.42} And he said: 'My companions and my relatives say: "Every prophet that has ever come has worked miracles, such as raising the dead and showing marvels and the like, but you have not presented anything like that and we will not accept prophecy from you if you do not give us a clear proof".'

{18.43} And I said to him: 'I will solve this matter for you, God willing'. And I wrote for him: '*Nothing prevented Us from sending signs, except that the ancients cried lies to them. We brought Thamud a she-camel as a clear sign, but they hamstrung her, so their Lord destroyed them*'.[141] This was to dismiss him with this saying, because Thamud was presented with a camel from an unknown place and others have been presented with well-measured words from the Holy Spirit | who foretell what will be, others revived 174a
the dead, such as Ezekiel and others. And he detested this passage.

[140] The term 'years of the hireling' comes from Isa 21:16 where it is given as the length of the rule of the Sons of Kedar. See above, p. 447, n. 20.

[141] Q 17:59 with Q 91:14. These verses are often adduced in Christian polemic against Islam in order to prove that Muḥammad did not work miracles himself (see for example the Apology of al-Kindī; Tien, *Risālat al-Kindī*, pp. 58, Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, pp. 158–159 (tr)). The *Legend* tries to prove the correctness of this polemical interpretation by putting it in the context of a specific request from Muḥammad's audience for miraculous proofs.

{18.44} تم بعد دلك اتي الي وقال[1] ان قومي[2] فجره[3] وهم يحبون النكاح .
فقلت له[4] في[5] الكتاب حل[6] لهم[7] رباع[8] *وخماس وسداس وسباع وتمان وتسع[9]
وعشار وما زاد علي دلك كان لهم حلال[10] وما ملكت[11] ايديهم من الامه[12]
من شرا[13] اموالهم ودلك انه[14] كان قد[15] اشتري جاريه واحب[16] ان[17] يعلم[18]
نساه بهده الايه انها انزلت[19] لتطيب نفوسهم[20] بدلك عليه بان[21] الله حلل[22] له
النكاح {18.45} وهدا الموضع[23] مكسره[24] علي هدا الكتاب .
{18.46} وعلمت[25] ايضا[26] انه عرج به الي السماء ⌜وعرفته ما كنت رايته وقت
طلع بي الملاك الي السماء[27] ووصفت له كل[28] شئ حتي[29] لم ابقي شئ الا[30]
وعرفته[31] اياه[32] وجعلته يقول لهم اني[33] ركبت البراق الي بيت المقدس[34] وانها[35]
سالته[36] ان يعفوا عن دنبها . {18.47} وهي[37] مشكره[38] له ولكلامه واشيا[39] في
هدا الموضع من خلف[40] عليهم اختصرت[41] في دكرها من[42] جبراييل وغيره
{18.48}وشد البراق ليلا يهرب .
{18.50} فلما قال لاصحابه هده[43] المقاله كدبوه[44] وقالوا له ⌜ما نريد[45] ان تصف
لنا صفة[46] السماء *وصف[47] لنا صفة[48] بيت[49] المقدس وما فيها[50] | . 174b

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[1] + لي VWY [2] اصحابي وقومي VW [3] عرب VWY [4] + ايضا VW [5] + هدا Y [6] f + ل Y [7] f < قلته لان ,V قلته لانه [14] Y ثري [13] Y الاماء [12] VW ه + f [11] Y < * [10] VW وتساع [9] Y اربعه [8] Y
W [15] < VW [16] i ف Y [17] f + ه Y [18] Y يعمل [19] Y نزلت من السماء [20] Y قلوبهم [21] VW و i
شي [28] (hom) Y < [27] ⌜ [26] < Y [25] Ÿ وعملت له [24] Y هو مخسرة [23] VW القول [22] VWY احل
VWY [29] + انني VW [30] ما Y وقد عرفته [31] VW, i < Y به [32] VW [33] انني VW [34] + منه شرف
مكسره [38] Y وهدا ,VW و f [37] Y ر + i [36] VW < f [35] Y شرفا منه + ,VW الي بيت المقدس ,VW
اتريد ⌜ [45] Y و + i [44] V ا f [43] VW في [42] VW و + i [41] VWY الخلف [40] Y كثيره + [39] Y مخسرة
VW [46] صفاة VW [47] i ف Y [48] * < VW [49] i و + V [50] f < Y

{18.44} After that he came to me and said: 'My people are shameless and they like marriage'.

So I said to him: 'In the book four and five and six and seven and eight and nine and ten are permitted to them, and what exceeds it is permitted to them, as well as slave-girls, whom their right hands possess, whom their money has bought'.[142]

And this was because he had bought a slave-girl and he wished to let his women know by means of this verse that it had been revealed to him, in order to appease them with it, since God had permitted the marriage to him. {18.45} And this passage violates this book.

{18.46} I also taught that he ascended with him to heaven, and I informed him about what I had seen that time when the angel took me up to heaven, and I described everything in greatest detail. And I made him say: 'I have ridden al-Burāq to the heavenly Jerusalem' and that she had asked him to forgive her sins {18.47} and that she was grateful to him and to his words. Certain things in this passage I stated succinctly, about Gabriel and others, {18.48} and the tightening of al-Burāq lest she would flee.[143]

{18.50} When he related this account to his companions they gave him the lie and said to him: 'We do not want you to describe heaven to us. Give us a description of Jerusalem and what is to be found there.'[144]

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[142] The allusion is to Q 4:3, which commands: 'marry such women as seem good to you, two, three, four, but if you fear you will not be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands possess'. This reading of the *Legend* alludes to the Christian polemical reading that asserts that if one *and* two *and* three *and* four women are permitted as wives one reaches the number of ten in total. In the Latin translation of a Mozarabic polemical work against Islam, the *Liber Denudationis*, it is claimed that it was interpreted as such by a Muslim theologian called 'David the Oriental'. It has been suggested that the name refers to the founder of the Ẓahirite *madhhab*, according to whom a most literal reading is always to be preferred: Burman, *Religious polemic*, pp. 246–247 (ttr). William of Tripolis mentions a similar interpretation in his *Notitia de Machometo*; Engels, *Wilhelm von Tripolis*, pp. 216–217 (ttr).

[143] It is unclear to what the words من خلف عليهم refer; they have been omitted in the translation.

[144] Here and in {18.46} the name Bayt al-Maqdis is used. Since it is stated that the Prophet's companions wanted something more than the description of heaven, and since the details of the story of al-Burāq pertains to the story of the Prophet's ascent to heaven in Muslim tradition, the first Bayt al-Maqdis must refer to heaven and the second to the earthly Jerusalem.

{18.51} فقال لهم امهلوني [1]الي ان[1] اسال ربي فاجابوه الي دلك[2] {18.52} واتي[3] الي وهو حزين[4] فقال[5] لي قد عرفتهم ولم[6] يقبلوا مني شيا مما[7] قلت[8] *وقد طلبوا مني صفة بيت المقدس فوصفت[9] له صفة[10] بيت المقدس عن اخرها[11] {18.53} وقلت[12] له[13] تقول[14] لهم اني[15] سالت ربي فوعدني[16] يرسلها علي جناح جبراييل حتي اصفها لكم شي شي وفعل ما امرته به .

{18.54} وكتبت[17] له هده الايه تاكيد لقوله سبحان من اسري[18] بعبده ليلا من المسجد الحرام الي المسجد الاقصي الدي باركنا حوله .

{18.55} وكتبت له كتاب[19] قاب[20] بين[21] قوسين او ادني .

{18.56} وجعلت علي[22] كلمن[23] يجي[24] بعده من امته[25] لا يقف علي هدا *الموضع ولا يدركه لانه ما طلع ولا نزل ولا تنبا[26] ولا ارسل {18.57} لكن بامر[27] ربي العظيم تمام ربي الغفور الرحيم وتمت مشية الله علي يدي وانفاد[28] امره في عباده .

{18.58} تم بعد ايام[29] اتي لي[30] وقال لي[31] مريت[32] علي[33] بيت احد اصحابي وهو زيد فصحت[34] به فخرجت الي زوجته فنظرت اليها وقد زال عنها العلم

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[1] ] < VWY [2] ما سالهم VWY [3] تم اتى VW, ثم انه اتي Y [4] القلب + Y [5] ثم قال Y [6] i ف Y [7] من Y
[8] قلته لهم Y [9] ثم اني وصفت Y [10] وصف Y [11] f < Y, * < VW (hom) [12] i ف VW
[13] ايضا + Y [14] قل VW, i < Y [15] انني VW [16] انه + Y [17] ثم اني كتبت Y [18] ا f Y
[19] كان الجميع Y [20] f ن V, فاة W [21] < Y [22] lege? < VW [23] كل Y [24] تحيي Y
[25] انبيا Y [26] بني VW [27] بادن VW [28] ونفاد VW [29] تمام هدا القول VW [30] i + ا VW
[31] انني + VW [32] مرت V [33] i ا VW [34] فصبحت VW

{18.51} And he said to them 'Please let me ask my Lord'. And they 174b
allowed him to do that. {18.52} So he came to me filled with sadness and said: 'I have told them, but they did not accept a word of what I said. They have demanded a complete description of the House of Holiness'. So I gave him a complete description of Jerusalem. {18.53} And I said to him: 'Say to them: "I have asked my Lord and he has promised me that he will send it to me on the wing of Gabriel so that I can describe it all for you" '. And he did what I had told him.

{18.54} And as a confirmation of what he had said, I wrote for him the verse: '*Glory be to Him who carried his servant by night from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque, the precincts of which we have blessed*'.[145]

{18.55} And I wrote for him: '*He was two bows'-lengths away or nearer*'.[146]

{18.56} And I made sure that nobody after him from his community would understand or comprehend this passage,[147] because he neither went up nor did he come down, nor did he prophesy nor was he sent by God, {18.57} but through the command of my mighty Lord the perfection of my forgiving merciful Lord |became manifest|, and the will of God and the fulfillment of His command to His servants was effected through me.[148]

{18.58} Then, after some days he came to me and said: 'I passed by the house of one of my friends, called Zayd. I called him and his wife appeared and I looked at her, without her being aware of it, and

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[145] Q 17:1.

[146] Q 53:9.

[147] As a description of God moving close to Muḥammad, Q 53:9 was used by Christian apologists as a parallel to Biblical descriptions of epiphanies, as a defense against the Muslim accusation that Christians believed that God was, at times, limited and confined to a certain space, esp. in the womb. Dionysius bar Ṣalībī, for example, quotes Q 53:9 as a defense against that accusation. Precisely because of the physical implication of these words, not all *mufassirūn* accepted that the figure descending and approaching the Prophet was God; the alternative interpretation that it was the angel Gabriel became prevalent (see Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, vol. 4, pp. 387–391 for the controversy). This reading is alluded to by Dionysius bar Ṣalībī as well, who says that if one takes the verse as a reference to Gabriel, then the next verse shows that Muhammad is simply the servant of Gabriel, rather than the servant of God (Amar, *Dionysius bar Ṣalībī*, vol. 1, p. 36 (t), vol. 2, pp. 34–35 (tr)). Because of the monk's comment that no one understands this passage, I assume that that the *Legend* alludes to the intra-Muslim controversies regarding its exegesis. For more detail, see: Roggema, 'A Christian reading of the Qur'an', pp. 69–70.

[148] The words between vertical lines have been added to make sense of this abortive phrase.

بدلك خوف مني وقد تشغفت[1] بها[2] فاحب ان تدبر لي هدا الامر لانك قد كفيتني كل الاسباب[3] ولم يبق شي الا ودبرته[4] لي وبلغتني امر عظيم وخطر جسيم عند اصحابي | وغيرهم من العرب . 175a

{18.59} فقلت له انا اكتب لك ايه حتي لا يكون عارا[5] عندهم وتقول لهم نزلت[6] هده الايه مع جبراييل {18.60} وكتبت له ايضا[7] فلما[8] قضي[9] ⸢زيد منها[10] وطرا ⸢ازوجناك بها[11] يا محمد[12] .

{18.61} وعلمت[13] له اشيا كتيره[14] من متل هدا[15] وكلها لا تشبه النبوه {18.62} وهي تكره[16] علي اصحابه ومن[17] بعده جعلتها وكتبت له ايضا ان الله يصلي عليه وجعلت فوقه[18] يدا اخره[19] .

{18.63} ⸢وجميع ما كتبته له بعضه ينقض[20] بعض وهده[21] الايه تحل غيرها {18.64} وجعلت له[22] كتابا ليس[23] يشبه[24] كتب[25] الانبياء لان ما جا فيه[26] شيا من هدا وكل كتابا جا صاحبه به[27] بنفسه[28] الا هدا .

{18.65} فاني[29] كتبت له ايه[30] واسميتها[31] ⸢ك ه ي ع ص [32]واخري الم[33] دلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدوا[34] للمتقيين[35] *⸢واني ما[36] اعنيت بهدا القول ⸢الا

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[1] VW شعفت [2] VW بمحبتها [3] VW الاشياء [4] i < V [5] W عاز [6] VW انزلت على [7] VW هكدا [8] i
[9] f ا V [10] ⸢ ~ W [11] ⸢ زوجناكما V, فزوجناكما W [12] + وكان الله الخاطب وجبراييل الوكيل
[13] W وكتبت [14] f < V [15] f ه VW [16] VW مكسره [17] i < VW [18] f < W [19] f ى V, f ا W و VW
[20] ⸢ كتبت له فيه ينقض بعضه VW [21] f ا VW [22] < VW [23] * < Y [24] f + ه Y [25] i + ب Y [26] f
[27] فيه VW, < Y [28] lege بتفسير VWY [29] VW فاننى [30] < VW [31] VW اسمها [32] ⸢
+ ا VWY
[33] Y ح ه ل ي ولرنصه W, كهيغض ولم فظه V, كهيعص ولم فظه [34] Y هدا [35] i ا Y [36] ⸢
Y وانما

I became infatuated with her.[149] I wish you would settle this matter for me, as you have solved all issues for me. There is nothing that you have not settled for me, and now this terrible affair has come on my path, which is of grave concern to my companions | and other Arabs.' 175a

{18.59} And I told him: 'I will write a verse for you so that there will be no disgrace with them, and you tell them "this verse has come down with Gabriel".' {18.60} And I wrote for him: '*when Zayd had dissolved his marriage with her, We married you to her, o Muḥammad*'.'[150]

{18.61} I taught him many things like this and none of it resembles prophecy. {18.62} It was detestable to his companions and those after him. I did this and also wrote for him that God blesses him and I protected him once again.[151]

{18.63} Of all the things I wrote, certain parts invalidate other parts. And this verse nullifies other ones.[152] {18.64} I made a book for him that does not resemble the Scriptures of the Prophets, because there is none of that in it. And with every Scripture its master has brought exegesis, except with this one.[153]

{18.65} And I wrote a verse for him and called it '*K H Y ʿ Ṣ*'.[154] And another one: '*A L M. That is the Book in which there is no doubt,*

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[149] The words *khawf minnī* have been omitted in the translation, because they are illogical here. In A1, on the other hand, Zayd's wife *does* discover the Prophet peeping at her, and she is scared as a result.

[150] * Q 33:37. For the central role of this verse and this episode of Muḥammad's life in Christian anti-Muslim polemic, see: Ch. 1, p. 30, p. 181, p. 194.

[151] 'That God blesses him' is a reference to the Q 33:56, which the monk said to have written in {16.26}. See above, p. 489. The translation of the last part of this sentence is uncertain.

[152] This probably alludes to the detailed Qur'anic studies of *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* ('abrogation').

[153] For this assertion, see below: n. 158, n. 159.

[154] Q 19:1; this is the longest sequence of unexplained letters in the Qur'an. Being quoted just after the assertion that the Qur'an has no proper canonical exegesis, one has to conclude that these letters are quoted to underline the alleged lack of meaning of certain parts of the Qur'an. In the absence of convincing explanations of these letters by Muslim exegetes, Christians, as well as other non-Muslims, developed their own ways of 'deciphering' them. See for example al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm's refutation of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's 'Manichaean' attack on Islam for the accusation that Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ invented his own interpretations of the secret letters, as well as all the *Ahl al-Kītāb*: Guidi, *L'Islam e il Manicheismo*, pp. 39–42* (t), pp. 91–94 (tr). For an example of a Jewish decoding of the secret letters see above: Ch. 6, p. 197; for a frequent Christian interpretation see Ch. 5, pp. 131–132 and below, n. 156.

الانجيل[1] الطاهر[2] وان اصحابه هم المتقيين وانه الي امرا ان اب اوله وابن وروح القدس[3] {18.66} وقلت له في هدا الكتاب لا يعلم تفسيره[4] الا الله[5] الحي والراسخين[6] في العلم[7] .

{18.67} وجعلت كلمن[8] يجي[9] من بعده محير[10] فيه لانه كتاب لم اجعل[11] له[12] تفسيره[13] متل[14] الكتب وجعلت علي كل احد[15] من بعده يفسره[16] علي قدر عقله ولم اجعل له تفسير[17] الا ما[18] في |كتابي هدا وعلمت[19] انه ¬ايضا شيا[20] 175b يختلفا[21] فيه[22] من بعده ويغيروه[23] ويزيدوا فيه وينقصوا منه ويكتب كل احدا[24] منهم ما احب لنفسه[25] كما[26] قد كتبت في اعلا[27] كتابي هدا مره[28] قبل هده[29] .

{18.68} قد كشفت[30] فيه حال الاديان[31] ¬ونعمه الله[32] علينا نحن معشر النصاري وكيف لطف[33] بنا فاسال[34] الله الدي اراد بقدرته انفاد حكمته وتمييز[35] عباده بهدا[36] وان[37] يخلص الكبار[38] منا والصغار[39] بخلاصه {18.69} وان يوقيهم[40] شر هدا الشعب {18.70} **لاني[41] اعلم انه[42] يكون[43] لنا[44] منهم اعدا ويخرج منها[45] اليهم[46] الغير مختارين *¬ولا رحمه[47] فيهم[48] فيكون علينا شرهم[49] اوكد من شر اوليك الدين[50] سلفوا من قبل .

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[1] ¬ Y الانجيل [2] < Y [3] Y, * اقدس [4] f + ا Y [5] < VW
[6] f < Y والزاهدون [7] Y العالم [8] < VW [9] < VW [10] VW, i ي Y مخبر [11] f + ه Y [12] < Y [13] f <
Y يعتمد عليه + [14] VW, f < Y تفسير [15] Y ما في ,VW متلما [16] VW من يجي + [17] Y مفسرا ,VW
ا f [18] < Y [19] VWY وقد علمت [20] ¬ ~ VW, انشا الله تعالي [21] Y يختلفون ,VW يختلفوا [22] < Y [23]
Y [24] i + و Y [25] VW, من نفسه Y من دات نفسه [26] i ب Y [27] f ي Y [28] i + ا W [29] f ا VW
تميز [35] Y واما انا بعد هدا جميعه ,VW و i [34] VWY ه + f [33] Y ونعمته ¬ [32] Y الديان [31] W كتبت [30]
يوهيكم [40] Y والصغير [39] X الكبير [38] X واسال الله ان ,VWY i < [37] VWY, ** < X المسلط + [36] Y
لانني [41] VW شا ان + [42] Y س + i [43] Y للنصاري [44] Y من النصاري [45] Y [46] < VW [47] ¬
برحمة [48] VW, * < Y ربهم [49] i + ا VW [50] f < Y

*guidance for the god-fearing*'.[155] With that saying I meant nothing but the Pure Gospel and that its followers are the God-fearing, and that the Father is the first and the Son and the Holy Spirit.[156]

{18.66} And I said to him in this book '*no one knows the exegesis except the Living God, and the well-versed in knowledge*'.[157]

{18.67} I made all who come after him confused about it, because it is a book for which no exegesis is made, as with other books.[158] I made everyone after him explain it according to his intelligence and I made no exegesis for it, except what is in | this book of mine.[159] And I 175b
knew that it was also something about which his future followers would disagree, and that they would change it and add to it and subtract from it.[160] And everyone will write what he likes for himself, as I have described above in this book of mine once before.[161]

{18.68} I have laid bare the status of the religions in it and God's beneficence to us, the community of Christians, and how kind He is to us.[162] So ask God, who with His might wills the fulfillment of His wisdom and the singling out of His servants, to save the great and the little amongst us by His redemption, {18.69} and to guard them against the evil of this people. {18.70} Because I know that we will have enemies from amongst them and that those who are not chosen will go over to them. And on them there is no mercy. Their evil will come upon us, even more steadily than the evil of those who were before.'

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[155] Q 2:1–2.

[156] This sentence is corrupt, but it is undoubtedly meant as a reference to the Christian exegesis of Q 2:1, for which see: Ch. 5, pp. 131–132, to which A1 refers more clearly.

[157] * Q 3:7; for an instance Muslim-Christian polemic surrounding this verse, see Ch. 5, pp. 133–134.

[158] The same point is made in the Mozarabic *Liber Denudationis*, which also quotes Q 3:7 and asserts that Muḥammad himself had no clue as to its interpretation and that later interpreters contradict each other. See: Burman, *Religious polemic*, pp. 278–279 (ttr).

[159] In other words, it is alleged that the monk who authored the Qur'an is the only who has at least presented some exegesis, that is to say: the *Legend* itself.

[160] This is an allusion to intra-Muslim polemic about the integrity to the Qur'an; see for this p. 160, n. 31.

[161] This is a reference to his prediction in {16.26}. See above, p. 489.

[162] 'The status of the religions' (*ḥāl al-adyān*) probably refers not only to how the Qur'an allegedly shows Christanity in a favorable light, but also to the degradation of the Jews, to which the monk draws Muḥammad's attention several times.

{18.71} فانا[1] مرهب[2] الخاطي اقمت في الدير مع بحيره[3] الراهب زمانا طويلا وحدتني[4] ووصف لي[5] هده[6] القصه[7] وهدا[8] الخبر كله[9] عن اخره ورايته وشاهدته وتبتت[10] احواله واشياته[11] وبين يديه كتبته وبامره نظمته .

{18.72} وهو يقول لي[12] لا تلومني[13] انت[14] ولا يلمني[15] من[16] يقراه[17] فيما[18] فعلته وصنعته[19] لاني[20] علمت[21] ما عملته[22] وفهمته *ورايته {18.73} وانه[23] يملك[24] ولا[25] بد من اقامته وبلوغ غايته واستيفا نهايته بما قراته وفهمته وسمعته وعاينته[26] ⌜فكتبت للمومنين غايته[27] واخدت لهم منه عهدا | وعهودا انسا[28] بعنايته[29] وطول[30] ايام دولته[31] . 176a

{18.74} فجازيته[32] خيرا وشكرته[33] ورايته عند العرب مكرما[34] وجيها وعند قومه[35] محبا[36] مقبولا[37] يحكم[38] ⌜بينهم ويصلح[39] امورهم[40] ويدبر شانهم وهم[41] له[42] شاكرون[43] داكرون[44] .

{18.75} ⌜ولربنا المجد والتسبحه والوقار الان وكل اوان والي دهر الداهرين والحمد لله دايما ابدا سرمدا .

كمل خبر بحيره الراهب مع الرجل الاعرابي بسلام من الرب[45]

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[1] i و Y [2] + الراهب VW [3] بحيريا Y [4] وحدي VW [5] * ثم انه وصف لي وحدثني Y [6] f ا V, i + ب وساير اسبابه /VW واسبابه lege [11] Y جميع + [10] Y عن جميعه [9] V ه f [8] Y الصفاة VW, الصفه [7] Y بما [18] Y ولا من يسمعه + [17] VW احدا ممن [16] W تلومني [15] VWY < [14] VY تلمنى [13] W < [12] Y لاجل ما VW, [19] VW < [20] Y لانني قد V, لانني [21] Y عملت [22] Y قد علمته lege [23] Y lege i < لهم [29] Y شتي [28] Y وكفيت المومنين بما باتي ⌜ [27] Y ونظرته في الرويا بطور سينا [26] i < Y [25] Y ملكا [24] Y اصحابه وقومه [35] VY مكينا [34] * < VW (hom) [33] Y فجزيه [32] Y م + f [31] Y lege i < [30] Y وكانوا [41] W و + i [40] ~ W ⌜ [39] Y موقرا [38] X ولا W, حكيما + [37] X < **, Y محبوبا [36] Y قومه كملت سيرة بحيره الراهب ⌜ [45] Y داكرين [44] Y من الشاكرين ولاسمه ابدا X, الشاكرين [43] X لله [42] Y ولامره طايعين X, واسبح لله دايما ابدا يا سرمد يا امين W, كملت سيرة بحيره الراهب ولله الحمد وحده V, فلدلك اعتمدت عليه والا جميعه يتسلم اليه وهو الحاكم العادل الدي له الشكر والمجد والتسجد من الملايكه Y الاطهار والكراوييم والساروفيم الي ابد الابدين ودهر الداهرين امين والسبح لله دايما

{18.71} Now, I, Marhab the sinner, stayed in the monastery with the monk Baḥīrā for a long time. He related and described this whole history to me in great detail. I took notice of it and was witness to it, and I verified its circumstances and its foundations. In his presence I wrote it down and I arranged it at his command.

{18.72} And he said to me: 'Do not reproach me, neither you nor the one who reads it, for what I have done and committed, because I knew what I knew and comprehended, and I saw {18.73} that he would rule and that his rise, his success and the accomplishment of his mission were inevitable, on the basis of what I had read, understood, heard and observed. So I wrote all of it for the believers and I obtained for them a treaty | from him, as well as promises of his care throughout the days 176a
of his rule.'

{18.74} And I invoked God's reward upon him and I thanked him. I saw that he was honored and distinguished amongst the Arabs and that amongst his people he was loved and well-liked. He used to act as a judge between them, settled their affairs and managed their business, and they were thankful to him and honored him.

{18.75} And glory, praise and honor are to our Lord, now, forever, and to eternity…. and praise be to God forever, eternally, everlastingly.'

The history of the monk Baḥīrā with the Arab from the desert is to end, with the peace of the Lord.

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